The

COMMONWEAL

A Weekly Review of Literature the Arts and Public Affairs

FOUNDED BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

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How to Cultivate One's Garden

ONE TRAGIC likelihood is this: the present war, which so far has seemed far less cataclysmic than the last, far less destructive, deadly and menacing to life, property and way of life, is doubtless considered by those whose business it is to know as being in the final account more effective and powerful and devastating than the last one. Both sides have admitted they want to win and we can feel confident that in their pursuit of victory both sides are utilizing with great expertness the evolution, progress and development which humanity has achieved during the past twenty years. Having concluded the neutrality debate and gotten over an initial case of jitters, this country seems more intent upon the search for "normalcy" than the times would indicate is wise. The United States is not going to be able to sit back comfortably, balance the budget, eliminate unemployment, shut out alien ideas and settle into a prosperous and Philistine pre-depression normalcy. If wars do nothing else, they certainly speed up social change to dizzy precipitancy. And this particular war is being deliberately fought not only as an old-fashioned international duel, but also as revolution. Whatever have been the immediate causes for the war, the underlying conditions necessary to make those causes effective have been spiritual poverty, social discontent, economic stagnation, political inadequacy and administrative failure. If, in a craving for comfort, the United States turns its back on these problems, we are going to find our country lagging dangerously behind the world. We will be a retrograde nation, and however decoratively our temporary normalcy may camouflage the knot of problems which has been tying down us as well as the others, we will find that a sword will be taken in the attempt to undo it here too. Reform is still as deeply necessary as recovery.

Hurricane Warning

Sea War

A NUMBER of special writers on the present war—notably Mr. David Lloyd George—have been saying that it would be principally a naval combat. They point out that the losses and carnage of 1914-18 on land were so terrific and did so much to affect morale that the general staffs would be content to let a condition of land stalemate develop; they further point out that large scale bombing from the air, as practiced in Spain and China, will very likely not take place in this instance because of the inevitability of reprisals. There is no point to that sort of campaign when indulging in it means a sure dose of your own medicine. After all the point is to win with as strong a nation left as you can manage, not to destroy yourself in the process. Events seem to be justifying these forecasts. Germany hopes to be able to starve England out by a sea siege; England attempts to strangle Germany by cutting off all her trade, incoming and outgoing. So far Germany has done an extraordinarily able job of it, too. What with submarines and mines and commerce raiders, she has deeply disturbed any British idea of "muddling through." Of course early successes rarely have great meaning, and a "new" weapon always produces a "new" defense. Indeed one trouble with new weapons is that they give ideas to the enemy, mildly toxic gas leads to the production of mustard and even more insidious and devastating compounds. If the Germans have a magnetic mine—which seems a little too much like the cover design of a popular science magazine—maybe British ingenuity will go them one better. It is always dangerous to prophesy, but it does look as though this would be a conflict of slow starvation and morale. This sort of war may seem less destructive at any given moment, but its consequences, in human terms, can be devastating beyond our power to imagine.

The New Weapon

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The Importance of Ideologies

EVER SINCE the Hitler-Stalin agreement was made known to the world, observers have wondered about its Far Eastern consequences. The irony of the situation would be made complete by a similar understanding between Russia and Japan. Last reports have it that pourparlers are going on both in Moscow and in Tokyo. Further reports have it that the Chinese Communist generals are not in utter harmony with Chiang Kai-shek. It has been suggested that the Russians fear another Munich in the Far East and that they will, indeed, get together with Japan if the "democracies" do not take a firmer line, meaning, of course, the United States, for England and France have about all they can handle nearer home. Japan has for some years been playing ball with the power boys. Russia is now openly one of them and can no longer serve as their classic opponent, whose very existence gave them an excuse for playing dirty. So there would be nothing extraordinary in a Russian-Japanese line-up. Yet somehow the idea seems just a little too obvious; one cannot help suspecting that the threats it implies are being consciously used by both parties to improve their respective diplomatic positions elsewhere. It is, of course, likely—and even desirable—that Russia and Japan at long last compose their fisheries fuss, their Siberian border disputes. They might also, and quite logically, enter into a trade agreement. But information at hand does not as yet warrant any guess as to what this would mean for China. Meanwhile our State Department has been taking an increasingly tough line with Japan, a line difficult to analyze. In so far as it springs from a hope of getting redress for real US grievances and from disgust at Japan's total war in China, it is a natural reaction. But there is another aspect to it: we might find ourselves in the position of serving as guardian for England and France in the Orient while they devote their full-time attention to more pressing matters at home, and that might involve us in war in a front even further removed than Europe. That game, whatever our sympathies, is not worth the candle.

What Not to Do in Asia

Plans for Administering Polish Relief

HUMANITARIANS in the world today are a courageous lot. The magnitude of the needs in China, Central Europe and domestic distress areas fails to dismay them. They just pitch in. Poland is a case in point. Poverty-ridden before the war, this land of 35,000,000 souls is almost prostrate now. And there are hundreds of thousands of needy Polish refugees in already hard-pressed neighboring countries. The way the Commision for Polish Relief, Inc., of New York, plans to meet this situation indicates the recent strides made in international relief technique. Since the German-controlled area produces enough food for its 22,000,000 and the Russian-controlled section is largely self-sufficing as well as inaccessible, the commission began by setting up relief stations in Roumania and other bordering nations. Here food, clothing, blankets and medicines are being dispensed. Negotiations with the German government were undertaken to arrange for the distribution of blankets, clothing and medical supplies in western Poland. Moreover, England has agreed to permit certain relief materials for Poland to pass through the blockade. Funds received are now cabled direct to the commission's offices in adjacent neutral countries. The machinery is set up, the needs well defined. All that it wanting to complete the picture is the generosity of the American public.

Everyone Cooperates

Reopening Mines and Factories

NOT SO LONG AGO the shift of manufactures from New England to the unorganized, low paid labor of the South called forth the direst of predictions. Professor J. Russell Smith of Columbia University freely foretold that New England would in time be merely a summer playground for the rest of the country. Others said the area would revert to agriculture, ordinarily not so bad a prospect but gloomier here because of so much stony soil. As factories were abandoned distress areas grew. But New Englanders are something like Old Englanders in their pluck and resourcefulness. In the past three years alone more than 14,033,246 square feet of factory space has been returned to production and 1,600 new factories have begun operations in the area. Massachusetts did away with its tax on machinery, and other states helped. But the motivating force was the committee of citizens in local communities organized to start new industries. In the spectacular case of the giant Amoskeag, N. H., woolen mills the reopened buildings now house more than 30 different manufacturing plants. New England believes skilled labor is its greatest asset; it counts on considerable assistance from the operation of the Wages and Hours Law. In eastern Pennsylvania the town of Minersville is exhibiting similar resourcefulness. Urged on by the local Episcopalian minister, some 400 miners who faced destitution because of the closing of the Old Lytle colliery last summer made all the necessary credit and marketing arrangements within two months. Labor was donated at first to provide capital, but the new cooperative enterprise has been faithfully meeting its payroll for the past three months. All indebtedness is paid off. There is still a spirit of American community enterprise that can be tapped.

Community Spunk

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Sad Fate of a New Swear Word

IN USING the word "Conshohocken" as a swear substitute in his latest novel, "Kitty Foyle," Mr. Christopher Morley produced some explosive results which were, presumably, outside the calculations of so amiable an author. He made the natives of Conshohocken mad. Considering the matter carefully, we to a certain extent deprecate this attitude. The fictional character who calls a car "a Conshohocken automobile" and describes himself as being "pretty Conshohocken mad" has no intent of offending; he is merely availing himself of a geographical mouth-filler. He is doing, in fact, what all of us genteel people do when we speak of "the darned weather" or "that blamed dog." Secondly, we do not think that "Conshohocken" suggests any particular sulphurous violence; it does not sound like swearing as Mr. Morley evidently hopes, and hence the denizens of the estimable community bearing that name cannot justly say that the novelist has imputed a baneful or blasphemous character to their town. Thirdly, with all possible respect for community sensibilities, the Conshohockeners (or ites) must be used to it by this time. Like the citizens of Wissahicken, Oshkosh, Passamaquoddy and many other points east, west, north and south, they must have learned that numbers of people find something humorous in the sequence and sound of the letters composing their civic name. We feel that, instead of regarding the invocation of Conshohocken as an intended "slur," they should follow the more constructive lead of their Borough Secretary who turns in a minority report of approval—"It'll help to advertise the town."

Conshohocken Objects

Some Straight Words About Youth

BY COMMON AGREEMENT young people face such real economic and social trouble today that it may seem a little hard to ask them to listen to lectures on their own deficiencies. Yet no one, we think, can deny the truth of Miss Dorothy Thompson's summing up of those deficiencies in her column. Miss Thompson's attitude has none of that triumphant fault-finding whereby established and successful people sometimes relieve their selfish uneasiness at the plight of those who never had their own opportunities. She specifically exonerates youth of blame in the matter, pointing out that not youth but youth's education is at fault. But her findings are very real. Commenting upon the results of the YMCA poll of young people, 80 percent of whom felt that there is now no connection between ability and a job, 65 percent of whom felt that they need expert advice in seeking jobs, and many others of whom wanted government help or more schooling, she points to the changed attitude toward work. Allowing for that absolute, and presumably large, margin of potential young workers who fail to find work simply because there is none for them to find, there are great numbers of others who have no conception of the dignity of work as such; of the need of starting humbly and working up; of the fact that any success worth having depends now, as it has always depended, upon individual effort and responsibility. Tight as the economic pinch has become, she avers that in cold fact, "there are more opportunities than there are young people willing to prepare themselves for them." And all the various lacks that she cites seem to her—quite rightly, we think—to go back to the primary lack of religion in educational training. The concept of life as a gift of God to be used worthily, of work as a sacred personal duty, of humble tasks or worthwhile when well performed, of spiritual success as transcending material success—these are the work of religion. They are also, as Miss Thompson so well implies, the indispensable foundation of real character and right living.

Virginibus Puerisque

The Budget Takes the Spotlight

IN A DANGEROUS WORLD, American statesmen, looking forward especially to the next session of Congress which begins in January, are getting closer to the perennial constants: death and taxation. Some intelligent observers expect Congress to worry about labor relations laws, and in general to smooth out the New Deal and appease groups and classes dissatisfied with American legislation since 1933. Perhaps they are right, but a strong argument against it can be put up. The employers will "appease" labor comfortably in the way New Deal critics want if let alone; controversy is exactly what leaders want to avoid now; enforcement policies can be shifted without public debates; an increase in private or arsenal employment would ease many stresses. The defense appropriation for 1940 is $1,760,000,000. The President expects the figure for the 1941 fiscal year to be around $2,250,000,000.

Death and Taxation

Farmers, looking for benefit payments and skeptical about the war and the danger of US entry, will be the bloc, if there is to be any, which will upset a legislative program built around the colossal arms budget. The President is said to be encouraging strict economy outside the military and naval establishments. The goal is an expense budget of only $9,000,000,000 and a deficit of only $2,000,000,000 for the 1941 fiscal year. Taxes to pay for the additional half billion for arms are wanted. The suggestion is to increase taxes on the lower incomes and to lower exemptions. Such a move appears wise to help meet whatever deficit comes. The closer the correlation between taxation and expenditure, the clearer would we see the fruitfulness and futility of our various appropriations.

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Eggs and Oranges and Germany

What it was like to try to get even minor luxuries in Berlin before war was declared.

By Doris Kirkpatrick

WHEN I hear over the radio that German women are standing in line before the food shops waiting for their meager ration I think of that year I spent in Berlin. A baby needs an egg and an orange a day. I ranged the city over on my march for oranges and eggs for my eight-months-old daughter. Miles I tramped the streets on wet cold and snowy days, ever before me the vision of the listless, pasty-faced German babies. No primitive cave-woman sniffing out food for her young ever had a sharper eye. Food was always on my mind as it was on the mind of most German mothers.

Even when we went to the movies we must first sit through a "Fight Waste Campaign" before the feature. Little black men would shrink down and lengthen up like Alice in Wonderland to show statistically the amount of food *per capita* that Germany could raise in comparison with other countries. In an immaculate kitchen a *hausfrau* was shown throwing a slice of bread into the garbage pail. A voice jumped from the loudspeaker. "German housewives, you must not waste bread like this. You are the guardian of food. Upon you our country must depend and upon your wise conservation of the nation's food supply."

At this point I snorted. What German ever threw away a crumb! There was never enough. Sometimes there were oranges worth their weight in gold, sometimes eggs, one or two, sometimes neither eggs nor oranges. Meat was scandalously high, the *ersatz* butter unpalatable, the grey bread tasteless and cream nonexistent. Once I saw a pineapple hanging in lone splendor in a store window. Hopefully I asked the price. Three marks—seventy-five cents! More than a half day's wages for a German workman. A worker seldom earns more than twenty-five marks a week.

One morning after a breakfast of hard rolls made out of grey flour, no butter, muddy brown water with no cream or sugar, I made up my mind to go to *Mart*. Twice a week the peasants come in from the country and take over a square for the day with their wares. It was a long distance to the Mart and a slippery, cold day but my youngster had had no eggs for days. With my black string bag, such as the patient *hausfrau* carry, I set forth. The peasant booths were heaped high with cabbages, wondrous cheeses of all kinds, fish swimming in tubs of water, live chickens and bright winter plants. I wandered from booth to booth watching and listening. The peasants, great, hearty, tall and strong with powerful voices, drank steaming black coffee and shouted back and forth to each other.

I stopped before a dairy booth of cheese and eggs. The couple had sprung full grown from some old German *Volksmärchen*. The woman's hands were great thick paws larger and stronger than a man's. Her thick black hair was piled high on the top of her head. Her face browned and roughened from exposure to wind and rain was a rich wine color. At the approach of a customer she roared like a lioness.

My knees shook as I weakly asked, "May I have six eggs, please?"

"And who do you think you are that you should have six eggs?" she shouted. "Are you one of my customers? I don't know you, I never saw you before."

"I'll come again until you do know me," I stammered. "Can I have some eggs?"

"You can't have no more eggs than anyone else. It is not allowed. Am I a hen that I should lay eggs?"

"Please can I have some eggs?"

"Eggs!" She threw up her hands. "Always they come to me asking for eggs. We should eat grass like the cows."

"Look," I said, "I have a baby. Give me one egg for my baby."

She grunted and picked up two eggs and put them in a sack as if they were diamonds. *"Zwanzig pfennig."*

"Danke schön." I grabbed the eggs before she could change her mind. A crowd was pressing hard at my elbow eager for their share.

Hands on hips she nonchalantly viewed the struggling people. *"Auf wiederzehen,"* she roared, beaming like a giant sun.

I blinked and stared. *"Auf wiederzehen,"* I gasped and fled.

All the way home I carefully held the eggs in front of me. But at my very doorstep I slipped and fell and the two eggs broke.

When I came in with my dripping egg yolks, which I had scooped up out of the snow, my hus-

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band was reading a pamphlet at his desk. I looked over his shoulder. National Food Corporation.

"Does that have anything to do with eggs?" I asked as I slid what was left of the yolks into a cup.

"Sure, the National Food Corporation has the whole say. I was just reading about their control of the peasants."

"You should see the Queen of the Eggs I met at the Mart. She rules her customers with a rod of iron."

"Humph, she's ruled with a rod of iron herself."

"How?"

"Not only the price of her produce is fixed by the government but her personal life also is interfered with. Take these hereditary farm laws. The farm cannot be sold or mortgaged or divided among the children but must pass to the eldest son. The son can never sell or mortgage his farm either and is bound to provide for the other children. The farm is kept in the family and the peasant chained to the land whether he would or no."

"I wonder what the peasants think of that. Next market day when I go after eggs why don't you come with me and ask them?"

"I might at that," he said thoughtfully.

And sure enough he did. It was the middle of the week and there was not such a crowd around the dairy booth. There she was brandishing a cheese knife in her strong red powerful hand and roaring at a little shrimp of a man clinging timidly to the edge of the booth. It would take more than storm troopers and concentration camps to control these people. No wonder the Nazis spent such enormous sums on propaganda and spectacular Sunday circuses.

"She's some baby," he eyed her respectfully. "Well, I'll just be running along. You're the family shopper."

"Come back, you coward," I called.

He waved at me gaily from the squashes.

"A half pound of cheese," I said, pointing to a great yellow moon. I wouldn't ask for eggs. Not right off.

She flourished her knife and brought it down into the cheese with beautiful precision. She flipped the cheese on the weighing machine and it was exactly half a pound. She grinned, wrapped it with lightning speed and tossed it across the counter.

"Anything else?" she roared.

"Well—er—any eggs today?" I began bravely.

"Ah ha, you ask me if I have eggs. Where should I get eggs?" she shouted accusingly.

I shrank down like a criminal before a bar. "Don't you have chickens—a big farm?" I asked.

"Nein, nein. A handful of chickens, a few cows." She shook her head. "I have to turn so much in to the government. A farmer has it hard these days."

"And you can't give up your farm to make a living at anything else, can you?"

"Give it up?" she growled. "No, of course not."

"Nor your son after you? He can't sell the farm?"

Her great shaggy eyebrows pulled together and she heaved an enormous sigh. "My son is no farmer," she said. She looked at me in a kind of wonder, slapping her great paw against her chest. "That I should have a son who is a fiddler! But you should hear him fiddle," she chuckled.

"But he has to stay on the farm," I persisted.

"Ach, so. I shall live a hundred years," she boasted.

"What do your neighbors think about these hereditary farm laws?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "What does it matter what they think!"

She lifted her head and looked around. There was no one at the booth, no one within earshot. She leaned her heavy elbows on a giant cheese.

"Once there was a peasant woman at the *Mart,"* she winked one great eye, "who sold fish. Every day she sang her little song. 'Herring—he-e-ring, Thick and fat as Goe-ring.' And what happened to her? The storm troopers dragged her off to a concentration camp. She stayed there two weeks and they let her off with a beating and a promise. When she sold her fish again she called: 'Herring —herr-ing, Thick and fat as—week before last.' "

She set her paws on her hips and laughter gushed out in a pure stream. "I got no eggs, but give your baby a carrot, a raw carrot."

I ran into my husband stuffing himself hungrily with chocolate. "Did you find out what your powerful Katrinka thinks of the farm laws?"

I looked thoughtfully at a limp raw carrot (it didn't look appetizing). "When mothers can't get food in their string bags for their children, you'd think they would begin to grumble about money going for machine guns instead of butter or eggs."

He shrugged his shoulders and went on eating chocolate.

"How long do you think the people will stand for this?"

He looked over at her booth. There was a crowd around. She was roaring happily, brandishing her knife in the air.

"She looks like a lithograph of a French Revolutionary," he said admiringly.

I looked at the huge knife upraised, the powerful arm. Some day, would history repeat itself, and that knife fall?

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Accent on Peace

Some thoughts for Catholic writers and readers in wartime.

By **Katherine Brégy**

THERE IS always a temptation, in a world shaken by the cataclysm of war, to wonder whether the arts and graces of life are worth while—to forget that they are even part of the heritage war threatens to destroy and that the very word civilization is bound up with the thought of civil liberties as against military restrictions. So it *is* a temptation. And Coventry Patmore suggested the answer to it—as to many another self-deception!—when he pregnantly referred to the two methods by which Satan seeks to confuse us: first by evil masquerading as good, but secondly by good masquerading as evil.

Yet just how, one keeps wondering, can the artist, the writer—particularly the Catholic writer, whose ideals are both natural and supernatural and whose sympathies are or should be both national and supranational—help most to promote peace in time of war? Naturally we share with all other human beings the duties of praying and working for peace—which means also praying and working to minimize the suffering, to limit the extent and to destroy the causes of war. But we all work best by keeping, like the shoemaker, to our own last. Already, even here in our own officially neutral country, we see the beginnings of a war hysteria breaking in upon normal thinking, driving people in feverish pursuit of the latest radio or news report. And when we remember the curiously hypnotic power of print and study the insidious and insistent propaganda at work to obsess us with thoughts of war—luring us by appeals to altruism on one side and promises of material prosperity on the other to become part of war—then it seems to me the work of the Catholic writer becomes definite and luminous.

Its possibilities stretch, of course, from the "literature of knowledge" which gives men facts into the "literature of power" whose business is to stir men's emotions. Just before the present international storm broke, during those tense weeks when the "war of nerves" was holding Europe in its strain, Mr. Chamberlain said some momentous things about journalism. He told the House of Commons that he wished to "urge the press to exercise the utmost restraint" because it was possible "for a few thoughtless words in a paper, not perhaps of particular importance, to wreck the whole of the efforts" being made by his Government to obtain a peaceful solution. And on the strength of a false report which had been telegraphed abroad, he marveled with what might seem to us almost excessive mildness that journalists should dare assume "responsibilities affecting not only themselves but the inhabitants of the whole world." . . . Then we look around us at the glaring headlines of our tabloids, the garbled news reports and reckless cartoons of more responsible papers and shudder at the possibilities of all this dynamite of print. It is the same with the noisy dynamite hourly exploding over the radio. Are we really so naïve that we do not know practically all reports from a country at war are censored by civil or military authorities, so that time and careful sifting are needed to pierce to the kernel of fact? Did we not learn from the recent Spanish conflict how news could be first colored at its source for propaganda purposes and then colored up again by local interests to make it doubly sensational—or serviceable? The negative duty of not perpetuating lies, not trying to excite racial or national hate—then the positive, more intricate duty of trying to tell the truth and keep clear of the sinister powers always working for *more* war —these are parts of the way, it seems to me, by which Catholic journalists can work for peace.

Creative writers—the romancers and poets and dramatists—will do their work along more emotional or more esthetic lines. There was a reason and a right to sing the praise of battle in primitive days when war was necessarily close to the heroism of personal combat: the single combat symbolized by the immemorial legend of knight against dragon, good against evil. Also, war was picturesque in its details then, as the bullfight remains a pageant of sadistic beauty today. Dawn clouds of romance still hang about the Trojan War, with its Hector and Achilles and Ulysses the wanderer: I hope archeologists will never find out that it was precipitated by any question of area or raw materials or economics instead of by those outrageous lovers, Helen and Paris!

No more noble war

But while there was obviously a time and a long time when war could be morally justified, the cruelty and meanness of actual warfare must generally have outweighed its nobility. If ever there

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were a "holy war" waged upon our faulty earth, it ought to have been the Crusades—those tragically idealistic expeditions of Christian Europe to recover the Holy Sepulchre and protect the faithful from infidel attacks. Yet the first Crusade, championed by Godfrey de Bouillon, and the sixteenth-century adventure led by Don John of Austria, seem to have been about the only ones where the holiness or even the success exceeded the futility. For the rest, it is not heartening to remember Eleanor of Aquitaine carrying her amours along into the Holy Land, or Louis IX leaving the France which so pitifully needed a saint-king to die of fever outside of Carthage, or the perpetual jealousies of the Christian knights among themselves, and the whole final heritage of disease and disenchantment. That dubious traffic between East and West may have been good for international trade and international scholarship. It was so bad for faith and hope and charity that it sowed many a seed of the Protestant Revolt.

Mechanization has at once so minimized the personal, picturesque element and so colossally extended the destructiveness of modern warfare that there is not much temptation any more for the poet to become its laureate. Sheer heroism—a love or even an excitement willing to lay down its life for a cause—will always challenge our hearts and our tears, like Browning's "Incident of the French Camp." But Tennyson celebrating the Light Brigade, sacrificed because "somebody blundered," seems not half so convincing nor half so contemporary as Alice Meynell, praying in the summer of 1914: "Lord, hide Thy face from man's unpardonable race!"

That is the reaction of the poet who thinks and feels today. He may praise Lincoln but he will scarcely praise the Civil War. Just as Belloc, who could not resist blessing the Balliol men in Africa, damned unhesitatingly the Boer War with its "treason done and a false word spoken . . . And bribes about and a treaty broken." And when we think of Joyce Kilmer offering his life almost gaily for the ideals of "democracy" and an "end of war," it is illuminating to recall that his "Prayer of a Soldier in France" is a prayer of quite conscious martyrdom; while the Christmas poem, "Kings," written shortly before he sailed overseas, has a bitterness as poignant as its sweetness.

But if it is difficult enough to keep our heads clear and our motives pure through the problems of ordinary living, everybody knows that it becomes almost a task of heroic virtue when the hysteria of war is loose in the world. We admit all the wise *clichés*—that a whole nation cannot be arraigned, that people are always better than their Governments, that every war carries the seeds of a new war, *et cetera*. But propaganda and nerves can unite to make us believe hatred almost a virtue. I remember hearing Bernhardt, during her final visit to this country, recite most exquisitely a poem in which a French poilu offers this hideous prayer against the Germans: "Father, forgive them not for they know what they do!" Well, it was Bernhardt, and while I shuddered a little I was carried away. . . . Then, a little later, I realized that the refrain was both blind and blasphemous—the sort of thing never thought of by actual fighting men but only by literary brooders. No, reason is not enough and hatred is not enough—even a hatred of war. Is it because the whole idea of hate tends to become warped and noisy, at once cruel and sentimental? This is the essential error of the communist school, and exactly what Catholic writers must guard against.

We are both too near and too far from the present European war to judge whether a little more time, a little more effort at arbitration might have brought about that "peace with honor" for which our Holy Father had worked and prayed unceasingly. But we Catholics whose "trade is words" can keep on reiterating that all war is a crude and cruel survival from ages when the machinery of law and conciliation were not fully developed—that it is outmoded and ought ages ago to have been outgrown by civilized people. However, since it has *not* been outgrown, men's hearts as well as their morale need to be kept up. There is indeed "time for comedy" in a war-torn world; and as one extreme of life seeks the opposite for its healing, we may even expect a renaissance of clowning. The writer who can amuse or charm people may well save them from neuroticism. The writer who brings them back to normal human work or the beauty of sea and sky and the "spacious vigil of the stars" may save them from fanaticism. And the writer who makes them more sensitive to the loyalties of human love, to its joy always trembling on the edge of pathos in a world that swings between birth and death can hardly fail to point on toward the God Who is Himself the sublimation of Life and Love.

Gilbert Chesterton, who was a very sane as well as a very sunny and sublime person, once called art the "signature of man." It is one of the things differentiating him from the beast or the barbarian, while war does not, of course, differentiate him at all. And Georges Duhamel, who happens to be a physician as well as a member of the French Academy, remarked recently that "because it interests us in life, art is very near making us love life." So perhaps the artist or writer—even the American Catholic writer of today—really can do something to make life lovable and livable again to *men of good will. . . . They,* after all, are the only ones to whom peace was promised—because they are the only ones who want peace. But they will not find it, or any other precious thing, without seeking it and fighting for it. Only the warfare will not be by bomb or bullet or blockade!

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Nature at the Hearthside

A brief account—very personal, too—
of this season's nature volumes.

By **Frederic Thompson**

A DREARY WASTE of words gets between covers on the general subject of nature; but as in nature itself, there are oases, some enchanting islands and garden spots. The most rhapsodic writing, what my father, who was a newspaper man, used to frown on and himself excel in—picture writing—is to this reviewer the most trying slosh of vocabulary, as a rule. Women, however, apparently dote on it, which simply leads to the conclusion that the burning of libraries, or editions of books, has been, when one stops to think of it, definitely unfair to the ladies.

Armed with a nod from the editors of THE COMMONWEAL and the redoubtable Miss Frisby, who switches the stop and go lights on review copies, I visited the publishers hat in hand—my hat, their hand—and asked for their nicest book about nature, suitable for giving at Christmas to a member of the Nature Hot Stove League. Doubleday, Doran and Company obliged with the first fieldbook about snakes published in this country ("Fieldbook of North American Snakes" by R. L. Ditmars, $2.50), something every nature lover—odious term, but it takes in a lot of ground—and every practical gardener interested in the scavenging aids nature itself affords him, should have on the handy shelf. It is a good thing to scare the children with, too, or any nervous maiden aunts on the verge of running away with the butler. The illustrations made me itch, and as my schoolmates at Newman may remember, I was one of the few boys who kept snakes in his room not only in the interest of natural science but also of the unnatural, terrifying initiations we used to have into the closely guarded secret society called "The Jacques," all stout royalists like Mr. Wm. Carr and Dean Agar, who were non-juring members. The grandson of General Sherman finally threw the snakes out of the Annex, where all the roughest boys in school tried to live, and the Jacques abandoned royalty to their own devices. If we had had the nice new handbook with the close-up illustrations, then, possibly we might have clung to them.

Next I might mention, if the audience has not walked out, five dandy small books (all $1.00) published by the old Back Bay firm of Hale, Cushman and Flint: "The Gardener's Almanac," by a Farrington, contributor to the "Timely Work" department of *Horticulture,* from which this is culled; "Herbs, How to Grow Them and How to Use Them," by Helen Noyes Webster, who confesses she shared freely the field notes of Mr. Stephen Hamblin of Harvard and Dr. Elmer Merrill of the Gray Herbarium, as well as a couple of other young ladies (by the way, I wish more American ladies who indulge in cooking would study the "How to Use" part of this book, and they might catch up with some of the French gentlewomen and gentlemen epicures); "The Lawn," by Charles W. Parker, which includes experiment station reports from *Horticulture,* that fine old family magazine esteemed by gardeners generally (if I may again interrupt myself, it would please me to say parenthetically here that the American lawn open to the dull and unseeing eye of the harassed motorist is to me a dreary and wasted savannah; I'd throw up an adobe wall about it, train some bougainvillea along the top and seed the rest as Monet used to do at Givernie, by scattering herb seeds, and wild grass seeds, and tree and vine seeds, and wild flower seeds *ad lib* and letting nature manage the ensuing profitable and pretty riot); "Rock Gardens, and What to Grow in Them," by James H. Bissland and Others (do you suppose they mean other Bisslands?), a gentleman who favors the American Rock Garden Society with its headquarters at 1270 Sixth Avenue, New York, with the terms "active and progressive"—active rock gardens are surely something everyone should love; and finally (we'll match the irate old Scotch philosopher of Chelsea near the Embankment, for honors with the length and involutions of this periodic sentence); "The Vegetable Garden," by Edward I. Farrington, who modestly says, in his introduction, and I believe with true modesty as he seems to write with authority and is no doubt related to the slightly sportier, piscatorial and epistolary Farringtons, that he can save any careful peruser of his handbook, also something of a joint effort, from many failures in the garden. These books, made by the Adams Press at Lexington, Masachusetts, are tastefully illustrated with helpful diagrams and rather fussy looking photographs, and except for the "Herbs" they are all indexed.

"A Prairie Grove," by Donald Culross Peattie (Simon and Schuster, $2.50), is an excellent book

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for any man or woman interested in the pioneer natureology of our ancestors who settled in one of the island groves of oaks in the rolling prairie of the old Northwest Territory, now Illinois and Indiana and Ohio, and, I guess, some of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, too. Mr. Peattie falls off the rhapsody wagon at times, but the nature of his subject indicates it—it is picture writing, and stirring, fascinating and informative writing: I would say a grand book for man or woman or child above fifteen, though it is no longer so new as it might be (better check and see if your intended has had it or read it—even if he or she has read it, it is still a dandy book for anyone's shelf of favorites for the quiet hour).

To me the most interesting, because most large and real in the scope of its matter, of all these books is "Agriculture in Modern Life," by O. E. Baker, of the Department of Agriculture, Ralph Borsodi, who with his family have put to the test "production for use rather than money profit living," and M. L. Wilson, also of the Department of Agriculture (Harper, $3.50). There is more food for thought in the matter and the fascinating graphs in this book, than anything I have read for a long time. And it is pleasantly, understandably written.

"What Shell Is That," by Percy A. Morris, of Yale Museum of Natural History (Appleton, $2.25) and author of "Nature Photography Around the Year," is a handy pocketsize manual, well illustrated in black and white (one longs for color with such a subject; it would save many thousands of words and wasted classifications by the amateur conchologist).

"Thoreau, Reporter of the Universe" (John Day, $2.50) calls for a New England background. There is something a little hard, if not downright mean, to a timid straddler of the Mason-Dixon Line, like myself, about Thoreau. He is hard, bluff and laconic, and a lot of people love him so. I admire him, particularly in these well chosen, almanac arrangement selections, but if permitted to do so quietly, I think I'll drift off with the mavericks through the blue bonnets and mesquite down to the willow bottoms and citrus trees of the Rio Grande, or the magnolia and towering elms along the Mississippi.

"Speckled Nomads, a Tale of Trout in Two Rivers," by H. E. Towner Coston (Macmillan, $3.00), is just the ticket for your friend who likes trout, or in fact any game fishing—beautifully illustrated.

"Edible Wild Plants," by Medsger, with a fascinatingly revealing introduction by Seton Thompson (Macmillan, $3.50), is a must book for all nature lovers as well as all of us who are in such dread of becoming direly poor that we are thinking seriously of learning, like Nabuchodonosor, what grasses we can eat and which we cannot. As a matter of fact, I seem to recall that Nabuchodonosor did not know, or his family didn't like to have him doing it, so he got into trouble. Obviously Dr. Medsger, who is Professor Emeritus of Nature Education at Pennsylvania State College, with his beautifully arranged, cross indexed and illustrated book would have been a great help to the King.

"Field Book of Animals in Winter," by Morgan (Ann Morgan, but I don't think The Anne Morgan), is a convenient size handbook (Putnam, $3.50) for the wanderer afield these days, and, as far as I know, an excellent one for amateurs and for teachers and students. You studes, as we say down south, have a look at it in your bookstore—it is a trot to an awful lot of nature knowledge.

"Earth's Green Mantle," by Sydney Mangham (Macmillan, $3.50), Professor of Botany, University College, Southampton, with a foreword by Sir Arthur W. Hill, K.C.M.G., SC.D., D.SC., F.R.S., Director of the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, who says, "by a process of photosynthesis" the reader "should be able to acquire vast stores of curious and hitherto unexpected information," is a formidable book, exhaustively illustrated, and something I'm saving to dip into at leisure, as possibly not being photogenic, I have found it pretty thick going. No doubt persons with more formal education in plant science, or maybe a little quicker in the top story than I am, would find the machete work easier than I have.

"Wonder Plants and Plant Wonders," by A. Hyatt Verrill (Appleton, $3.00), who writes detective stories when he is not writing about nature, covers the same matters as the foregoing in a manner much easier on my digestion and I may say, if I am permitted to generalize, with a grand lot of information that you can stump people with who haven't read the book or haven't a nature encyclopedia, like Houghton Mifflin's standard one, handy or pretty well by memory.

Two Small Boys

A man-child stacks his arms, home from the lists,
A tired, sweating, earth-stained manikin,
Weighed with the spoils of play, his grimy fists
Tight-crammed with the outdoors he has brought in.
A privileged freebooter, he bears loot
Of puffball, acorn, shell and pod and hull,
Of scent of leaf and grass, the strength of root,
The lore of woodfolk and his throat is full

Of bird-notes: a boy drunk on sun and air;
And I, contained and sober, drop my guard
When he storms my defenses, and I share
A caterpillar as his calling-card,
A traveler returned with a rich store
From a far country just beyond his door.

ALEX R. SCHMIDT.

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Books for Christmas 1939

THE OBJECTIVE and subjective process behind this Christmas listing will be kept closely secret. The major defect may be that a reader will never know whether a title is omitted through ignorance (many are), or deliberately (as many you might expect to find here actually are). There is perhaps some lesser trouble with books included, because we don't swear to have read every one personally. Books published in foreign countries, books of the more specialized varieties are left out on purpose, if with pangs—science books, scholarly works, cook books, children's books (see, however, the children's books ratings by Harry Binsse in the December 1 issue), hobbies, etc. We have left out nearly all the war books: a department of them was tried, but got much too long, and at least on Christmas we hope all readers will pray that they will be of only ephemeral interest anyway. Detective stories are missing, but not because we don't love and respect them; and there are not many funny books.

The beginnings of such a list as this is agonizing, because from the bird's eye, December view the production of the year at first seems a huge and undistinguished mass of stuff. Then, when the start is made, cutting down and eliminating volumes is agonizing. If you like books, there are, after all, a lot of things on the market you want, and good American publishers have not been lazy during 1939. This list is no work of ultimate evaluation. You can supplement it with the moral judgments made by qualified censor organizations, with popularity polls registered by lists of best sellers, with the choices of book clubs, with the words of wisdom of your favorite lecturer. But the books named here—assuming you give them to the proper persons, who in turn are assumed to be equipped to read critically and maturely—are more than a hundred of the year's more welcome volumes.

The Biggest Bargains. First rejoice in the efforts to produce cheap books. You can pick out any number of excellent reprints or republications for little money, and the liveliness in the field this year lends hope that better new titles are on the way. "Everyman," the "World's Classics" and the "Modern Library" are still turning out under-a-dollar classics and recent best sellers. Sheed & Ward added three reprints to their "Catholic Masterpieces" last spring. The well established Garden City Publishing Company, Sun Dial Books, Blue Ribbon Books and Triangle Books kept selling items from $.39 to $2.49. Modern Age Books, Inc., survived some terrible selections of originals and republications and in a growing list (from 25c to 95c) includes good buys. The "Living Thoughts Library" of Longmans, Green sells for a dollar interpretations of influential dead writers by influential live writers, for example (the most recent), Karl Marx by Trotsky. The series must be read critically. Macmillan has the "People's Library" at 60c per volume—mostly sociology for the layman (again the critical layman). "Pocket Books," at a quarter apiece, are a very hopeful series of republications, from Shakespeare to Ellery Queen.

Among the Giftiest. Art books in many ways make the best gift books, especially lately, when so many are decorative to the extreme, with superb reproductions. First let us note "Art from the Mayans to Disney," a charming and intelligent group of illustrated essays by Jean Charlot, published by Sheed & Ward for $2.00. There are a lot of music reference books, histories and biographies, including Simon & Schuster's "Men of Music," by W. Brockway and H. Weinstock ($3.75). There is "Western European Painting of the Renaissance," by F. J. Mather (Holt, $6.00). "The Way of Western Art," by E.P. Richardson (Harvard, $4.00). Most Christmas presenty of all appear to be the volumes in the Phaidon, Hyperion and Iris series. New this year are:

Phaidon series (Oxford): RUBENS, $2.50. RODIN, $3.00. MASTERPIECES OF EUROPEAN ART, $3.00.

Iris series (Oxford): ENGLISH WATER COLORS, $3.00. FRENCH CATHEDRAL WINDOWS OF THE TWELFTH AND THIRTEENTH CENTURIES, $2.50. ART OF THE FAR EAST, $2.75.

Hyperion series (Tudor): MAILLOL, $2.98. TURNER, $2.98. PETER BREUGEL, $4.98. NATIONAL COSTUMES OF CENTRAL EUROPE, $3.48. FLEMISH PAINTING OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, $3.48. FRENCH PAINTING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, $3.48.

Life, High and Low. If you succeed in hitting the right subject, a good biography is often a most acceptable Christmas gift. This year the reading of biographies is still the fashion and the heroes of current studies have been picked from every period from classical to modern times.

There are two volumes distinctly of the charm variety, and it may not be without significance that both of them deal with later nineteenth century United States. "Maud," the diary of a popular young lady, edited and arranged by Richard Lee Strout (Macmillan, $3.50) is unusually diverting. Bellamy Partridge's "Country Lawyer" (Whittlesey, $2.75) is the non-fiction hit of the year.

A. M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s, "Orestes J. Brownson: a Pilgrim's Progress" (Little Brown, $2.50) deals with a controversial figure badly neglected by Americans of our day. Mr. Schlesinger presents a sympathetic if not always completely understanding picture of this gifted philosopher who became a convert to Catholicism in 1844. The book gives an adequate picture of Brownson's stormy career as author, editor and lecturer. In "Thoreau" (Houghton, $3.75) Henry Seidel Canby presents an objective portrait of one of Brownson's friends and Brook Farm associates. It may be remarked in passing that the escapist cult of Thoreau is growing in popularity in these days of war and industrial ugliness.

To leave the nineteenth century and return to stern reality it might be well to detour via the sixteenth century

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and Valeriu Marcu's "Accent on Power—the Life and Times of Machiavelli" (Farrar, $3.00). Or if you have in mind some friend who would be more interested in one of the two most important modern applications of what the unimposing Niccolo observed and recommended, you might buy Boris Souvarine's "Stalin" (Alliance, $3.75). Or you might prefer something on the causes of the present war such as David Lloyd George's "Memoirs of the Paris Peace Conference" (Yale, 2 volumes, $10.00) or Volume VIII, "The Armistice," of Ray Stannard Baker's "Life and Letters of Woodrow Wilson" (Doubleday, $5.00).

Some interesting volumes that defy pigeon-holing are Hilaire Belloc's "Charles II" (Harpers, $3.75), the "Letters of T. E. Lawrence" edited by David Garnett (Doubleday, $5.00) and Carl Sandburg's "Abraham Lincoln—the War Years" (Harcourt, 4 volumes, $20.00). The first of these is another of Mr. Belloc's highly original interpretations of a European historical figure. The material that continues to be published by and about the late T. E. Lawrence should convince the most skeptical that he was one of the most intelligent and fascinating characters of modern times. Carl Sandburg's latest addition to his study of the Great Emancipator concludes a definitive work.

In the field of professional, as opposed to intimately personal, biography and memoirs there are several likely volumes. Even in translation Antoine de St. Exupéry's "Wind, Sand and Stars" (Reynal, $2.75) deserves the title of the best-written book of the year, with flying a worthy subject for such unparalleled rhetorical skill. Other volumes of unusual worth are Dorothy Day's remarkably written "House of Hospitality" (Sheed & Ward, $2.50); Francis Clement Kelley's "The Bishop Jots It Down" (Harpers, $3.00); "My Day in Court," by Arthur Train (Scribners, $3.50), "A Goodly Fellowship," by Mary Ellen Chase (Macmillan, $2.50).

There are three full-length autobiographies which cannot be overlooked. Nicholas Murray Butler's "Across the Busy Years" (Scribners, $3.75) casts interesting sidelights on recent times, particularly in political and academic circles. No one can preside at a dinner with the same *éclat* as the genial president of Columbia University. Perhaps even more genial is "Autobiography with Letters," by William Lyon Phelps (Oxford, $3.75). Particularly intimate and warmly human is A. A. Milne's "Autobiography" (Dutton, $3.00).

Finally there are biographies of those who have most successfully achieved genuine harmony between temporal and eternal, earthly and heavenward, human and supernatural aspirations—the saints. This year marked the completion of the scholarly revision by Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Donald Attwater of Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints." Volume XII ($2.25) like its predecessors is published by Kenedy, as is the complete index to that series, Donald Attwater's "A Dictionary of Saints" ($2.75).

One of the most remarkable saint's lives of the year is the work of a Protestant minister. Ernest Raymond's "In the Steps of Saint Francis" (Kinsey, $2.50) captures the spirit of the Poverello of Assisi to a remarkable degree, abetted by the author's humble pilgrimage to the historic scenes of Saint Francis's moving career. Donald Attwater's "Saint John Chrysostom: the Voice of Gold" (Bruce, $2.00) is a competent doctrinal as well as biographical study. It presents an illuminating picture of a time as stormy as our own. One of the fine biographies of the year is Theodore Maynard's realistic and stirring life of Saint Vincent de Paul, "Apostle of Charity" (Dial, $3.00).

Pomes. There are those who like poetry, and those who don't, and usually you know pretty well which among your friends fall into which category. Those who like usually like very much indeed; and volumes of verse are blessedly inexpensive. This season seems to be an anthology season. Half the books we suggest are in that useful but thankless category. One of the most interesting of these (beautifully and restfully printed, too) is "Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century" edited—like its companion volumes of earlier vintage, "English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century" and "Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century"—by Carleton Brown (all Oxford, $3.50). The collection is a little on the scholarly side. Devotees of the Catholic Poetry Society and its fine magazine, *Spirit*, will welcome "From the Four Winds," a collection of verse reprinted from its pages (Idlewild Press, $1.00). Thomas Walsh's "The Catholic Anthology" has been given a rebirth by Macmillan at a very odd price—$1.69—and enriched with more poems and useful biographical material about the poets. Walter de la Mare's "Behold This Dreamer" (Knopf, $4.50) contains prose as well as verse and is, just as you might suspect, all about sleeping and dreaming. Finally there is the first volume to appear of that great project undertaken by the late Imogene Guiney, "Recusant Poets" (Sheed & Ward, $6.00). It is a splendid work, issued at a preposterous price. And here are a few volumes by single authors:

SONNETS AND VERSE. By Hilaire Belloc. Sheed & Ward. $2.50.

COLLECTED POEMS. By Robert P. Tristram Coffin. Macmillan. $3.00.

FAMILY REUNION. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, $1.50. Poetic drama, a bit on the puzzling side for those who are literal minded, but contains some fine verse indeed. "Practical Cats," Eliot's other 1939 volume, is not so good. He should leave light verse to the versifiers.

SELECTED POEMS. By Sister M. Madeleva. Macmillan. $1.60.
THE LANTERN BURNS. By Jessica Powers. Monastine Press (New York). $1.50. A first volume by a highly gifted young poet much of whose verse first appeared in THE COMMONWEAL.

1066 . . . 1492 . . . 1939. Source material has flooded the history book market. Most of these listed may be so considered, but beyond these are the different colored "papers" and "books" produced by warring nations, and the apologias of European statesmen from Hitler through Daladier to Chamberlain. Major history sets were finished or added to during the year:

EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION, ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT: Vol. VII (*final*), THE RELATIONS OF EUROPE WITH NON-EUROPEAN PEOPLES. Oxford. $6.50. This finishes the project, edited by the late Edward J. Eyre, written from a Catholic viewpoint, and including sections

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of very varied quality. This volume particularly useful and a particularly good idea. In more ways than one, it is a super-horror story.

THE CAMBRIDGE ANCIENT HISTORY: Vol. XII (*final*), THE IMPERIAL CRISIS AND RECOVERY, A.D. 193-324. Macmillan. $10.00.

Herder of Saint Louis expected to have volumes 30, 31 and 32 of Pastor's HISTORY OF THE POPES out before the holidays, at about $5.00 per volume.

AMERICA IN MIDPASSAGE, by C. and M. Beard. Macmillan. $5.00. A new volume to the "Rise of American Civilization," but nowhere near as good as the first two.

AFTER SEVEN YEARS. By R. Moley. Harpers. $3.00.

AMERICA AT WAR: 1917-1918. By F. L. Paxson. Houghton. $3.75.

AUSTRALIA. By Paul Maguire. Stokes. $3.50.

CHURCH AND STATE. By L. Sturzo. Longmans. $5.00. An extremely good study.

DIARY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. By G. Morris. Houghton. 2 volumes. $9.00.

DIPLOMACY. By H. Nicolson. Harcourt. $2.00.

HERITAGE OF AMERICA. By H. S. Commager and A. Nevins. Little, Brown. $4.00. Star this one.

THE HUDSON. By C. Carmer. Farrar & Rinehart. $2.50. One of the best of the "Rivers of America" series, a good series.

ICELAND, THE FIRST AMERICAN REPUBLIC. By V. Stefansson. Doubleday. $3.50.

THE JACOBEAN AGE. By D. Matthew. Longmans. $5.00.

MOHAMMED AND CHARLEMAGNE. By H. Pirenne. Norton. $3.50.

OUR LAND AND OUR LADY. By D. Sargent. Longmans. $2.50.

PARADISE PLANTERS: THE STORY OF BROOK FARM. By K. Burton. Longmans. $2.50.

THE PROTESTANT CRUSADE (1800-1860). By R. A. Bellington. Macmillan. $5.00.

THE THIRTY YEARS WAR. By C. V. Wedgewood. Yale. $4.50.

TUDOR PURITANISM. By M. M. Knappen. Chicago. $4.00.

THE VATICAN AS A WORLD POWER. By J. Bernhart. Longmans. $4.00.

Realism and Romance. Novels are the hardest of all to pick from. Presumably you will know the giftee, the book club selections and the best seller lists. But don't forget:

THE DELUSSON FAMILY. By J. Ducharme. Funk & Wagnalls. $2.50. Definitely a Catholic novel.

HERSELF. By Doran Hurley. Longmans. $2.00.

THE HOPKINS MANUSCRIPT. By R. C. Sherriff. Macmillan. $2.50.

LOOK AWAY. By G. N. Shuster. Macmillan. $2.50. Which we would recommend anyway, but which certainly recommends itself anyway.

MOMENT IN PEKING. By Lin Yutang. John Day. $3.00.

SEA ISLAND LADY. By F. Griswold. Morrow. $3.00.

SMALL BEER. By L. Bemelmans. Viking. $2.50. Humorous in his odd way and illustrated.

TO THE END OF THE WORLD. By H. C. White. Macmillan. $2.50. Which has most justifiably been received as about the best of any of the clearly Catholic novels.

UNCLE FRED IN THE SPRINGTIME. By P. G. Wodehouse. Doubleday. $2.00. Which is funny.

ESCAPE. By Ethel Vance. Little, Brown. $2.50. CONFIDENTIAL AGENT. By G. Greene. Viking. $2.00. ROGUE MALE. By G. Household. Little, Brown. $2.00. These three probably represent a trend of violent new idea, semi-mystery melodrama. The first the best.

Social Aches and Bellyaches. There has been a long need for some convenient analysis from a Catholic and Christian point of view of the problems of economics and society. It may seem strange to recommend a text book as a Christmas present, but there are text books and text books. This one—which is that convenient analysis we have been looking for—is Father John F. Cronin's "Economics and Society" (American Book, $2.50). Particularly good for those who have finished school.

In spite of Christmas, we do have problems, and some unostriches like to know about them, even while celebrating. Here are four good problem books, that will puncture almost any complacency. "Factories in the Field" by Carey McWilliams (Little Brown, $2.50) deals with the industrialization and proletarianization of agriculture. "Holyoke, Massachusetts" by Constance McLaughlin Green (Yale, $4.00) gives another horrid example of what the spirit of industrialism can do, and shows that it is silly to say that any plan is better than no plan. A bad plan is, as should be apparent, worse than no plan. Holyoke was a planned community from the beginning; now look at the poor thing. "These Are Our Lives" is another successful production of the WPA Writers' Project (edited by W. T. Couch; University of North Carolina, $2.00). Here is the human problem in the South, forty-odd of the atoms that, taken with a few million other atoms, create that unhappy region's social problem. A horrid bill of particulars showing just how much damage America has done her basic wealth, her soil, is presented in "Vanishing Lands" by R. O. Whyte and G. V. Jacks (Doubleday, $4.00), a problem about which we should all be concerned.

Naziism has (some may think it incredible after all the welter of writing about it the last few years) given us three good books this season. "A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question" by Jacques Maritain (Longmans, $1.00) should help to clarify uncertain minds on a sadly crucial subject. "National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church" by Nathaniel Micklen (Oxford, $3.00) is useful for the record. And it would be wrong, if arbitrary, to leave out the indispensable "Revolution of Nihilism" by Hermann Rauschning (Alliance, $3.00).

What to do about our aches and pains has produced two good physicians. Father Charles Bruehl writes on "The Pope's Plan for Social Reconstruction" (Devin Adair, $3.00), pointing out what encyclical mindedness can mean. What co-ops and education do mean and can do is hearteningly, inspiringly set forth by a founder of the Antigonish good work, Father M. M. Coady ("Masters of Their Own Destiny"; Harpers, $2.00).

Seeing the World by Armchair. American publishers continue to bring out handsome volumes depicting various quarters of the globe in story and half-tones. Here are a few that should be of unusual interest for readers of THE COMMONWEAL and their friends. "Pilgrim Places in North America" by Ralph and Henry Woods (Longmans, $1.50) is a useful and attractive little compendium on Catholic shrines and spots of historic interest. "Saint Peter's on the Vatican" by Augustin McNally (Strand Press, $3.50) is a complete and painstaking guide, the first to be issued in English, to the Vatican Basilica. And

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Mr. McNally is a man who loves its every stone and cornice. For people who like to learn informally about the flora and fauna and customs of far away places Agnes Newton Keith's "Land Below the Wind" (Little Brown, $3.00) might be a happy choice; it deals with North Borneo. A fine photo book, "The Vatican," by M. Thérèse Bonney (Houghton, $3.00) is just out.

For addicts of "See America First" it is hard to beat many of the WPA guides to cities and states. The list is a long one, but some of the more recent volumes of unusual interest are: "Florida" (Oxford, $2.50); "Kansas" (Viking, $2.50); "Kentucky" (Harcourt, $2.50); "Montana" (Viking, $2.50); "North Carolina" (University of North Carolina, $2.50). Other recent volumes are published by Binfords and Mort (Oregon and Washington), Hastings House (Arizona, Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area and the Mission of San Xavier del Bac) and McClurg (Illinois, Washington, D. C., and Dupage County).

Americans Who Are Latins. The anti-European sentiment for solidarity of the western hemisphere along economic, political and cultural lines is reflected in the flock of books that have appeared here recently on Latin America. A special subject from a very special point of view concerns two recent books on Mexico by two popular English Catholic authors and journalists. In "Another Mexico" Graham Greene (Viking, $3.00) appears to be rather horrified at the primitive living conditions he encountered by straying off the beaten tourist track. In "Mexico: an Object Lesson" (Little Brown, $2.50) Evelyn Waugh traces the troubles below the Rio Grande to Mexican veering toward the Left with help from Washington. In the main Mr. Waugh makes out a pretty strong case.

A nineteenth century liberal, positivist point of view is characteristic of many of the recent more general books on Latin America. They are useful for information on specific aspects of our neighbors' geography, economics and politics; they are less successful in grasping the essential notes of Latin American culture. Recent volumes are: "Americas to the South" by John T. Whittaker (Macmillan, $2.50); "America Faces South" by T. R. Ybarra (Dodd Mead, $3.00); "South American Primer" by Katherine Carr (Reynal, $1.75); "New Roads to Riches in the Other Americas" by Edward Tomlinson (Scribners, $3.75); "Introduction to Argentina" by Alexander Weddell (Greystone, $3.00). Ivan T. Sanderson's "Caribbean Treasure" (Viking, $3.00) with its unusual drawings and anecdotes of the jungle is more of a naturalist's book.

Operation of the Mind and Spirit. The established English and French Catholic thinkers have produced for American readers a rather meager harvest compared to other years; unsettlement abroad may account for this. Maritain has, in addition to his book on the Jewish question, had only one older work translated, "An Introduction to Logic" (Sheed & Ward, $3.00). Its scope is comparable to his "Introduction to Philosophy." Very early in the year Gilson's "Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages" (Scribners, $1.50) appeared; it is still a good gift. His more recent "Christianity and Philosophy" (Sheed & Ward, $2.00) is a less original piece of work, though certainly excellent. In England Christopher Dawson has propounded a point of view in "Beyond Politics" (Sheed & Ward, $1.50) that exposes liberalism and tries to find some silver lining in the totalitarian cloud. E. I. Watkin's "Catholic Center" (Sheed & Ward, $3.00) propounds the irenic approach to all human interests. And a recent convert, Rosalind Murray, analyzes the bankruptcy of secularism in "The Good Pagan's Failure" (Longmans, $2.40). Finally one of the most provocative of contemporary Protestant thinkers has produced "The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day" (Karl Barth; Scribners, $1.00).

Here are some other philosophical volumes:

JESUIT THINKERS OF THE RENAISSANCE. Edited by Gerard Smith, S.J. Marquette University Press. $3.00. A birthday collection for a beloved teacher. Well done; some of the essays are rather technical, others not at all.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF COMMUNISM. By Charles J. McFadden. Benziger. $3.50. Careful and irenic analysis of dialectical materialism and its fellow travelers.

THE MAKING OF PHILOSOPHY. By André Brémond, S.J. Benziger. $1.75. Like all attempts at popularizing the unpopular, this will please some experts, displease others and probably serve its purpose fairly well.

ROOTS OF CHANGE. By Joseph H. Fichter, S.J. Appleton. $2.50. Thoughtful essays in analysis of thinkers who have affected the world in which we live, from Tom Paine to and beyond Marx. Also irenic.

STORY OF THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS. By George E. Catlin. Whittlesey. $5.00. Political and social science, not for the beginner.

Spiritual reading is a delicate subject. Tastes and needs vary so tremendously and unpredictably. We feel it wise, therefore, to refrain from making any recommendations in this department. But at least we can call attention to two new Bible translations that merit attention: Father George O'Neill's "The World's Classic: Job" (Bruce, $2.75), a brilliant successor to the same scholar's collection of psalms and canticles, and the first volume of the Westminster translation of the psalms (I—XCI) edited by Cuthbert Lattey, S.J. (Longmans, $2.20).

The Unclassified. Lots of books just don't fit into categories; often such books are particularly good books, too. Here is a handful of this year's such. John N. Then has prepared another collection of Christmas lore, "Christmas Comes Again" (Bruce, $1.50). Two books by Catholic authors have aroused more than parochial interest this fall: "Orchard's Bay" by Alfred Noyes (Sheed & Ward, $2.50), a charming volume mostly about gardens (including many new poems), and "Men, Women and Places" by Sigrid Undset (Knopf, $2.50), collected essays principally on literary subjects. One of the major recent projects in American Literary History that has been under weigh for years came safely into port last summer, "The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson," edited by R. L. Rusk (Columbia, 6 volumes, $30.00). Margaret Halsey has earned a riposte, and it has been made: "I Lost My English Accent" by C. V. R. Thompson (Putnam, $2.00).

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How the Irishman Talks

How countrymen's speech may become streamlined by the exigencies of urban culture.

By Sean O'Faolain

LAST WEEK I was down in the County Mayo. I met the inevitable Gaelic scholiast. He was obscure in his references, and the fact that he had only three teeth in his upper jaw did not make his Irish conundrums any easier to follow. He stumped me, first ball. I did not mind that, and he did not mind that. He was delighted, and I knew he made a practice of it. Cackling with pleasure at my inability to follow the tortuosities of his punning Irish and his arcane humor he assured me that nobody had ever understood him. That even Tomás O'Maille, professor of Irish in Galway University, was down there one time and *he* hadn't understood him! When I wrote him down, with the help of the schoolmaster (whose youthful spirit had been broken in by this sort of initiation) it all became quite simple.

Long ago when I was a kid I had my first experience with this sort of game. And it was the same game. Then my uncle had said:

"What's the meaning of this, boy? Cuir an casúr i lár an urlár agus tóg an billeóg as an casóg."

(Or that was what it sounded like to me.)

"It means," I said, very proud to know so much Irish, "to put the hammer in the middle of the floor and to take the hook out of the coat."

My uncle roared with delighted laughter.

"Not at all," he cried. "It means for to put the fresh twisht in the moist middle and to take the young leaf out of the young twisht. That's what it means."

Sourly I argued that it was a pun, and it could mean either, and anyway that his meaning meant nothing at all.

This old Mayo six-footer, with shrewd laughing eyes, a grand, kindly face, weatherbeaten by the Atlantic and softened by resignation as it was hardened by courage, set me thinking, however, of another thing. Of his *speech pronunciation* itself. It was grand Irish, as for idiom, vocabulary, grammar. But it put me to the pin of my collar to understand two-thirds of it, and I count myself an average good Irish-speaker. I asked myself:

"Where is 'Oxford' Irish? What corresponds to 'B.B.C. English'? To French of Touraine?"

When I was at college there was a girl there with a small and pretty mouth. She was always in trouble with the Irish professor, Tórna. He disapproved of the small and pretty Irish she not so much mouthed as *mouéd*. She was absolutely distinct, however. Between her kind of pretty Irish and this magnificent unintelligibility of my Mayo-man's throaty Irish, is there no common denominator? Personally I object to the idea that you can't talk good Irish unless you swallow half of it, and spit the rest!

First of all, there *is* a physical difference between the sounds of Irish and English. You cannot talk Irish as if you were talking English, any more than you can talk French as if you were talking English. Your lips take up positions for certain French sounds that they never take up for English sounds. With Irish it is the same. We Irish, whether we are talking Irish or English, keep, by nature, by centuries of habit, our tongues and mouths within a definite, distinctive set of physical positions.

For example. Say the word *this*. Get an English friend to say the same word. It's quite different. In saying it you put your tongue just behind your teeth. Just try it. Whereas your Englishman, or any man rigidly trained to speak English in the English way, put his tongue out *between* his teeth so that you can see the tip of it.

That's the Irish *t*. You get in the word *tá*, meaning *is*. It is the simplest possible test as to whether a person is talking Irish like an Irishman, or talking Irish like an Englishman. The little girl with the small mouth always said an English *tá*. It was no more the Irish language than it was Arabic—even though it *was* clear and intelligible.

The reason for this is simply that we always keep our vowels well back. It is a Celtic trait. The Welsh do it also. When an Irishman talks in English he does it, and hence the so-called *brogue*. He will say not "my hat," but he will say something like "my hot." The Englishman's vowels are never so open as that. The common example is the way we say "cook," as if it had about six *o's* in it and the cook was as long as a wet week. The Englishman says "cuk," as if she was a dwarf. We all know the way a Dubliner says "book." It sounds like the motor-car, "Buick." He takes so much time over the word that, so to speak, he sits down for a rest in the middle. (There are other technical reasons, too.)

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Well, there it is. Very much simplified, of course, for a phonetic expert would qualify and elaborate all this in many additional ways. The basic fact is that we Irish keep our mouths open, our tongues back, our vowels high up and broad, and we hold them wide and long. The Irish countryman, like every countryman, does all this—only ten times more so. He is accustomed to talking in the open air, shouting against wind and weather, and he is leisurely. But no city-man can, by nature, habit and environment, talk like that. He speaks quickly, quietly, saving his mouth all the labor he can. Compare a Devon man and a Londoner, a Bavarian and a Berliner, a girl from West Cork and a Cork city girl from Fair Hill or Merrypole Lane. I was in Cork the other day, and I assure you that when four girls passed me by—me, a Cork cityman!—I couldn't understand a word they said, it was so swift and bitten-off. It sounded like a machine-gun saying, "Maagie, Maagie, Maagie, Maagie, Maagie . . ."

In time Irish will, possibly, become spoken commonly in our cities. It will not be like the Irish of the Irish-speaking Gaeltacht. It will be city Irish. Surely it will be just as good Irish, though? In those future days the Gaeltacht native-speaker will not be a criterion. People will say, "He speaks excellent Irish. Such clarity! Such purity! Real Grafton Street Irish."

All that means is that, by degrees, Irishmen will speak more and more to the front of their mouths. In America the nasal quality will probably disappeare for the same reason. Irish has a nasal quality too, like all speech that resides high up and back under the cavities of the nasal organs. That will be no loss to Irish, or to Anglo-Irish. Visitors to the Abbey Theatre must have noticed that, at times, even good speakers of Anglo-Irish were unintelligible just because they kept their voices too far back, did not realize that speech must resound, be projected, and not eaten. American English does resound, nasally, but even that is often lost in its own reverberations. In a word it is part of the forward march of civilization that speech should come to the front.

Reluctance

Spring is too sudden for the heart,
Which seeks to set each joy apart.

Which longs to save, however brief,
The misty green of bud and leaf.

Which would retain the flowering world
In petals, only half uncurled.

And moon at crescent, day at morn,
Love at first promise, shyly sworn.

Poor heart, that would keep mind and sense,
Tiptoe upon experience.

SARA KING CARLETON.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE THREATENED general strike in the movie industry, it seems, has been averted, although its possibility remains as a future threat, not only in the world of moviedom, but in other industries; part of the black shadow of gigantic labor troubles which so ominously overhangs the country as the obsession of the war in Europe gradually loosens its grip on the American mind and public attention begins to focus upon our domestic problems, and, most particularly, the crucial Presidential campaign of next year. That much of the pending struggle will revolve around the labor situation is certain.

The signs of the times clearly indicate that a powerful tide of really popular resentment against labor unions, their leaders, their methods, their influence, and even against the basic concepts of unionization, is rising. It is greatly to be hoped and desired that discussions of the problems associated with labor unions now raging not only in the press and other forums of publicity, but everywhere throughout the country privately, and which will lead up to legislative action sooner or later to curb the present power of the unions, may stick to principles and fundamental issues rather than personalities and personal errors and faults.

Many of the errors and faults, not to use harsher yet still truthful terms, that could be justly laid to the charge of union labor leaders, are well known, in fact, notorious. Many of the labor leaders quite certainly are exceedingly dubious characters. But if labor unions are to be judged and dealt with chiefly on the basis of the rage and resentment and suspicion excited by the errors and blunders of too many unions and the shortcomings and even the crimes of the racketeers and outright crooks who far too often gain control in the higher ranks of the union leadership, injustice of the clearest kind may easily result.

I know nothing of the rights and wrongs involved in the movie labor situation beyond the little printed in connection with the threatened general strike, but in view of the surrender of the employers to the demand for a wage increase for the unions chiefly concerned, it would seem clear that either the wage demand was justifiable, or else the employers decided that the unions were so well organized and controlled that the general strike could have been carried out successfully and felt themselves obliged, therefore, to choose the lesser of two evils.

That they took this action even although they had been presented with a powerful weapon to influence public opinion through revelations in the press that the chief labor leader of the threatened general strike was stained with a particularly nasty police record was a very curious feature of the situation. It might have been supposed that the movie magnates would have used the scandal for all it was worth as a pretext to avoid dealing with the leader in question and arousing public wrath against him, in which wrath the justice or injustice of the claim he presented would have been lost sight of and then ignored. But in so strange

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an industry as that of Hollywood, possibly the moral stigma attached to such charges as were made against the labor leader in question have ceased to have much meaning. Anyhow, the employers did not fight their battle with that particular weapon. Perhaps this is a hopeful event; but it is hard to say whether it is or not; it may merely indicate callousness to moral considerations and not a high-minded act. Hollywood is a world to itself.

But in the great world outside of Hollywood, the issue remains a grave one. Only in the minds of one hundred percent Communists and Marxian socialists does profit-making business in all its myriad ramifications seem in itself essentially wrong, even criminal, because a breach of the true economic laws that ought to prevail according to Marx and his fellow prophets. When individual business men are exposed as crooks, or as rotten people in their private lives, the general public does not draw the conclusion that all business is rotten, and should be abolished.

Most people very sensibly recognize the fact that individual wrongdoing by a business man is no more a sound argument against business in general than is the cowardice of a few soldiers a proof that a whole army is corroded with cowardice and treason, or that the sins of some individual clergymen prove that their Church is wrong in its doctrine. Yet, as history sadly proves, when great storms of emotion are aroused by propaganda, it is not around abstract points of principle that controversy rages in the minds of the mass of people, but around personalities and the sins or faults attached rightly or wrongly to such.

But the rights won by organized labor are not likely to remain detached from the consequences of the wrongs done, or alleged to be done, by the unions or their leaders at a time when a great mass movement has been aroused which tends toward the denial of the very basis upon which ethical right or wrong must stand in a free society—the basis of religion. Into the vacuum in the souls of millions of men which has been created by the failing of faith in God and consequent belief in organied religion—which is the case today—other spirits rush in order to dominate and direct human life. The denial of the right of unionization and collective bargaining ultimately rests upon ethical, or vitally religious, sanctions. The exercise of those rights should not be denied because of the incidental failure of some unions, or particular labor leaders, to live up to the standards of morality.

But in the movement away from all the gains made during the last few years in social justice, a movement created by reaction, and aided by the errors and faults of individuals, there is great danger that justice will be forgotten and only resentment will be remembered. The deplorable lack of unity that exists between the two great main bodies of organized labor, or, rather, their irreconcilable leaders, tends to encourage this resentment. From all points of view it seems likely that organized labor must face soon the greatest crisis in its history in the United States. It is to be hoped, and believed, that really responsible religious leaders will be found on the side of organized labor, in spite of the follies and errors of individual labor leaders and wrongly directed unions. For principles are at stake, rather than personalities.

Communications

FIFTEEN YEARS

"The Commonweal" appreciates the opportunity of publishing this communication from John F. McCormick, who was Business Manager for so many years. It deals with an aspect of the life of "The Commonweal" not well known to the present editors or to most of the contributors to the Fifteenth Anniversary Issue. It is needed to round out a picture of the first fifteen years.—THE EDITORS.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I would be the last one in the world to sound a discordant note on the fifteenth anniversary of THE COMMONWEAL, but when I finished reading the issue with all the fine articles about the early days of the magazine which stirred memories of happy years and happy friendships, I felt as though a very serious omission had been made.

After all, those years—happy, troublesome, full of worries, triumphs, joys, disappointments, glorious friendships—couldn't have been without those we neglected to mention, the men and women who made THE COMMONWEAL possible. From that day in the fall of 1924 when I joined the little group in what we all considered a great adventure there were two sides—both important; more, both essential to its existence, the literary and the financial. We of the staff had high ideals. We wanted to produce a magazine worthy of the Church we loved. We wanted brilliant writing, clear thinking, proof to the universe that Catholics were not a breed apart in the work-a-day or literary world, that a better understanding of Catholic thought by people of all faiths, or none at all, would make this world a finer place to live in; and we wanted Catholics to know their Church as fellow Catholics, more articulate perhaps than themselves, felt about it. They were grand ideals, still are and, I hope, always will be.

But—and this brings me to the reason for this letter—there were others beside those mentioned in your anniversary number who had the same ideals. They were the men and women who furnished the money to make possible the exposition of those ideals. Unfortunately they have not had articles written about them. They will feel, undoubtedly, that I have betrayed a trust (for they are like that) in writing about them for publication, but knowing you of the New COMMONWEAL personally I feel you too will want to give them the credit they deserve. These benefactors—and I know them—were motivated by the same high ideals as we were. They were just as much a part of the great adventure in their inner minds as we. They gave the money generously which permitted us to produce a magazine which has come to be accepted as a vital living voice of an institution that every day becomes better understood by non-members and better loved by its sons and daughters.

To name all those who made THE COMMONWEAL possible would be a tremendous task. There were many in those early years who contributed the minimum membership fee of ten dollars who found that a greater hardship than those who gave a thousand dollars. Their names

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were legion—their reward is their own. There were others who gave not only their money but their time and their best thought to our problems.

First of all was William V. Griffin, whose name seldom appears in Catholic circles. From the begining ours was an informal organization and he was the informal Chairman of the Board. No man ever gave so unstintingly of his time and thought to our problems than he. At times he was an ogre to the force, especially to Michael Williams and myself, but we knew deep down in our hearts that he was always thinking of the ultimate end and that to him the success of THE COMMONWEAL and its original ideals were the burning passion of his life. He knew no compromise. Personal reactions meant nothing to him. Yet I know how much he suffered in making certain decisions which meant life to THE COMMONWEAL. To him more than anyone else behind the scenes, in time, money and thought, THE COMMONWEAL owes an impossible-to-pay debt. To go into the details of all he did would cause mental anguish to him, so I simply name him as the backbone of THE COMMONWEAL'S financial struggle.

Another man who gave both money and thought to every COMMONWEAL emergency (and they were chronic) was Robert J. Cuddihy of Funk & Wagnalls. No better Catholic ever lived. He knew the problems of the Church and saw in THE COMMONWEAL at least a partial remedy. An experienced publisher he knew how almost futile such a publishing proposition as THE COMMONWEAL without subsidy had always been. He knew that journals of opinion must always depend upon the generosity of spirits kindred to its writers for existence. Never once was he deluded about self-support, but he always hoped that eventually a sufficient number of Catholics, with all our educational facilities, would see the light and support a magazine intended and designed for them. But with that hope in the back of his mind he always expected—and accepted—the inevitable. I remember one night he addressed a dinner meeting arranged by John Raskob and pleaded with a group of wealthy Catholics to come to our rescue. Michael Williams had spoken of our needs, of the work we wanted to do for the Church and had spoken brilliantly and effectively as he has always done from a heart and mind full of undying love for his great ideal. He was followed by Mr. Cuddihy, a practical business man and publisher. He didn't pretend to be an orator. He, too, spoke from his heart. He aimed his remarks at successful Catholic business men and and he climaxed his short, effective talk by indicating his belief in THE COMMONWEAL by pledging $10,000 for its support. John Raskob, as host, did not want to embarrass his guests in any way, so he withheld his own generous pledge until later in the evening, but one after another the men at that meeting—all Catholics, all with a desire to help—pledged amounts which became an honor roll to us and made it possible for THE COMMONWEAL to continue. Rumor gave credit from time to time that THE COMMONWEAL was supported by this person or that, but for the record I'd like to say here and now that at no time did any one person, no matter how large his contribution, try to control or influence the editorial policy of the paper.

That dinner did not end, however, the financial difficulties of THE COMMONWEAL. As a matter of fact it was not the first crisis—nor the last. Before that many had helped us over difficulties with donations from one dollar to many more. Following that there were crises sometimes seemingly hopeless but always friends came to our rescue and we survived. Father T. Lawrason Riggs of Yale was one of our most generous contributors from the very beginning of the project. With him should be mentioned Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes of Columbia, Monsignor John A. Ryan and Thomas F. Woodlock, because they all gave generously of their money and of their time and thought, rarely missing a business or editorial meeting. Twice John S. Burke found funds for us to keep the spark alive and was always ready to give his time and thought to our problems. Our Ambassador to England, Joseph P. Kennedy, and his associate, John J. Burns, helped us through a crisis, which we of the Old COMMONWEAL always remember with deep gratitude.

And so I am hoping that this after all will not be a discordant note. Rather I feel that all the friends of THE COMMONWEAL—old and new—will find in these few facts an incentive to carry on the great work we started, headed by Michael Williams, back in 1924. If they do (and I hope they do) the work and worries of that little group and those who made their work possible will live happily in your reflected glory.

JOHN F. MCCORMICK.

TO MY AMERICAN FRIENDS

Bethany, Pennsylvania.

TO the Editors: M. Jacques Maritain has many admirers in the United States, and I am one of them. It means that I fully realize that my own opinion next to Maritain's is of no importance whatsoever. So, if I give it here it is more as a question addressed to M. Maritain than as an affirmation of a disagreement.

I have read Maritain's article in THE COMMONWEAL of October 13, and also in *Temps Présent* of September 29. Both surprised me. Now comes another letter from him, even more disconcerting (THE COMMONWEAL, November 24).

When Maritain says: "When the decisive cause of a war is fidelity to a promise made to a people which is a victim of savage aggression . . ." I cannot help asking if he should not have used the word "apparent" instead of "decisive."

If "decisive" is the right word, why was it not so in the case of Czechoslovakia? The fact that England and France may have hoped to quiet Hitler down at Munich does not throw a better light on their claim to fidelity to promises. It sadly looks as if fidelity was only a convenience to be remembered or forgotten at will.

M. Maritain speaks of "a boundless will to domination which recognizes neither good faith nor respect for treaties nor respect for elementary human rights . . ." What will he say of England? Does the difference lie only in the fact that the British had a successful early start in getting their share of the world?

Does it not seem that if we speak of "enslaving peoples by terror" we have to make it clear first that we refer only to the continent of Europe and exclude everything

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else such as Ireland, South Africa or India? Once we have agreed on that, it clarifies M. Maritain's definition of a "just war"—"the decision to resist, at the cost of blood, a boundless will to domination . . ." It should read "to German, or Nazist, domination." If not, why has no one spoken of a "just war" when other world powers have crushed and enslaved people?

If one chooses to wake up to the challenge of a "just war" only when Germany is warring for power, it is one's privilege, provided it is made clear that it is so—not a case of offended virtue, but only a business matter.

If fidelity to promises and righteous indignation are arbitrary matters governed by opportunity, it is no longer necessary to hide behind the statement that "in a human conflict no one is above reproach." It is understood beforehand that convenience and not morals governs the situation.

But it is quite surprising to find the worn out analogy of the "murderer" and the aggressor nations under M. Maritain's pen. Is it necessary to point out once more that it is not the case of a peaceful unarmed family attacked by a criminal, but of strong and weak armed groups trying to get the best of each other?

Shall I dare say that, as far as arguments are concerned, M. Maritain's seem weak? He is trying to justify a feeling, what he cals an "immediate perception," namely that Christian civilization is in danger of being annihilated in Europe. Nazism and Communism will tramp it down if allowed to do so; they already have done it and will become more and more ruthless as their power grows. And the only way M. Maritain advocates of stopping force and violence is the use of more force and violence.

The saints and martyrs of the first centuries knew better than that. They organized the most formidable resistance to oppression which ever existed. And they won. It may be said that Christianity will not survive unless our blood is shed, that we have "to resist, at the cost of blood"; but let us make no mistake, *our* blood, not somebody else's be he pagan, nazist or communist. Giving up our life is the only thing we have been asked to do for Christ. There should be no submission, ever, to force or violence, a refusal to surrender, even up to death, our own. No earthly power, whether it be Nazism, Communism or Imperial Roman domination, can stand against such resistance. But it is true it may take centuries. If we are unwilling to take that hard "one-way" road let us at least be honest with ourselves and say, "I am not ready to give up my own life entirely to stop the reign of oppression. Therefore I try to take another's life in the hope that, hereby, I shall put an end to that reign of violence."

This is so blunt that it sounds like sheer nonsense. It is a sort of boxer's philosophy, to which we may resign ourselves if we lack the guts of the first Christians.

Only, will it work?

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

Glen Ridge, N. J.

TO the Editors: M. Maritain says: "It is entirely understandable that the bishops of the countries at war should exhort their respective peoples to serve their countries loyally. However sad may be the division thus suffered by Catholicity, it would be naïve to be scandalized by it."

If the cause of the Allies is a just cause, as M. Maritain believes, then the cause of the Germans is unjust, and M. Maritain believes that too. How can it be "entirely understandable" that the bishops of Germany should exhort German Catholics to serve their country's unjust cause? Does M. Maritain mean to imply that the German bishops are unaware of the wickedness of Germany's aggressions? To be sure, "serving their country loyally" might mean for German Christians the duty to disobey their pagan rulers, but judging by the context that is not what M. Maritain has in mind.

If the sickening conquest of Poland was unjustified, then acquiescence in that conquest is unjustified. The Christian may not surrender his conscience to the state, and it would not be "naïve" to be scandalized if he should appear to.

I suppose that there is justification for being silent about a particular evil if you believe that by attacking it at some later time you will be more effective in destroying it. However M. Maritain doesn't speak of silence, but of exhortation. I do not say that the German bishops are wrong: I do not know. But M. Maritain cannot say that the German cause is unjust and then, that the bishops who exhort their people to support it are acting in an "entirely understandable" way, nor can he dismiss the subject by calling those who don't understand "naïve."

I have the greatest respect and admiration for M. Maritain; it is for this reason that I raise the point. I think it is not too naïve to hope that he will explain it.

NOËL HINRICHS.

CHRISTMAS AND THE LEPERS

109 East 38th Street,
New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: While the joy of this coming holy season fills the hearts of every one, particularly in these United States, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith begs a remembrance for its annual Lepers' Christmas Fund. We appreciate that the demands upon the charity of the readers of THE COMMONWEAL are many and urgent, but we beg to remind you that our appeal is made in behalf of the most unfortunate of God's creatures and in the name of Christ, Who loved the lepers.

Your charity requires none of the great sacrifices made by the zealous missionaries who have left home and loved ones to labor under the most trying conditions for the outcasts of humanity. Only a small act of self-denial, the sacrifice of some personal pleasure, will provide the offering for which we ask. No gift too small—none too large, to earn the everlasting gratitude, not only of the lepers and the missionaries, but of the Redeemer Himself as well.

Offerings from the readers of THE COMMONWEAL may be sent to your Diocesan Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, or to

RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS J. MCDONNELL
National Director

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The Stage & Screen

Key Largo

MAXWELL ANDERSON'S latest play is a tragedy of the loss of faith—not religious faith, but faith in any meaning or belief in life. King McCleod is a radical who in Spain joins the Loyalists, realizes that they are beaten, tries to persuade a group of Americans he has led to desert and, when he fails, deserts himself, joining the Franco forces to save his life. Stung by his conscience he returns to America to confess his act to the families of the men he abandoned. On a Florida key he meets the father and sister of one of his comrades and again shows his cowardice and lack of belief in anything by knuckling under to a gambler. In the end, however, he regains his manhood by realizing the nobility in the souls of two Seminole Indians and goes to his death by killing the gambler and being killed by one of the gambler's satellites. But it is not the plot that really counts; and to be frank the final tragedy is an utterly contrived and unnecessary one. McCleod could have saved the sister of his dead friend by other means than the one he takes. Mr. Anderson has never been one of our most skilful masters of theatrical structure. So let us turn to what he is really interested in—the study of a tortured soul. McCleod is the center and focus of the play, is a sort of modern Hamlet in so far as he is weak and vacillating, but unlike Hamlet he has argued himself into the only belief he has, that man is without meaning. The result is inevitable —this particular man becomes a coward and a weakling.

I have said that "Key Largo" is not a tragedy of the loss of religious faith. What I mean is that Mr. Anderson has not visualied it as such. In reality, however, the loss of any sense of religion is implicit in all the actions of his chief protagonist. It is this, whether Mr. Anderson realizes it or not, which is the real basis of the play. McCleod is logical and having no belief in anything beyond this world, his logic leads to its inevitable sequel. Though the animal is not evil, because he lives by instinct alone, man by being given reason becomes evil when he lives the life of instinct unhindered by a realization of anything higher than that instinct. McCleod sees nothing beyond this life; and more logical than Mr. Anderson himself, he follows that logic to the end, or nearly to the end. He denies in his words and acts that honor and integrity and faith of soul exist, and when at the end he sees them at last in two poor Indians, his ignorance comes to him as a sudden revelation. But the real reason for that ignorance even then escapes him, as apparently it has escaped Mr. Anderson himself. Mr. Anderson is a poet, though he has written more eloquently than i n"Key Largo," and the reason is perhaps that confusion of mind makes a confusion in his words.

The part of McCleod is magnificently acted by Paul Muni, with variety of mood and voice and posture. Mr. Muni is indeed welcome back from the fleshpots of Hollywood. He is an actor endowed both with emotional warmth and intellectual power. Admirable too

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are José Ferrer as Victor, Ralph Theadore as the rascally sheriff, Frederic Tozere as the gambler, and Harold Johnsrud as D'Alcala. Uta Hagen acts the girl with great intensity, though one might wish for more variety. Guthrie McClintic has staged the play admirably for the Playwrights Company. GRENVILLE VERNON.

"Winter of Our Discontent"

IF THE goriest passages in English history are your favorites, you'll be sold on Universal's new film, "Tower of London," which is really an illustrated outline of Richard III's evil machinations from 1471 to 1485. Shakespeare did it better, of course; but what Robert N. Lee's screenplay, produced and directed by Rowland V. Lee, lacks in depth of characterization, it makes up for in vivid, lusty horror. You see a complete set of fifteenth-century scoundrels led by Basil Rathbone's Richard, who is just the sinister villain you had always pictured. He is ably assisted in his dirty work by Mord, the boss of the Tower, none other than gruesome Boris Karloff, with a shaven head, club foot, crow on shoulder and a ready ax in hand. Once Richard decides that he won't remain sixth in line for the throne, things happen. The Prince of Wales is killed at Tewksbury, paper-crowned Henry VI gets stabbed in the back, Clarence (Vincent Price) gets his in Malmsey, Edward IV (Ian Hunter) dies in bed and the two little princes are smothered and buried in the Tower. There are other miscellaneous killings and tortures thought up by Richard and executed by Mord until the final, beautifully staged battle of Bosworth and Henry Tudor's victory. The actors are nicely dressed for this costume party, but they fail to make the people seem real. Nan Grey and John Sutton carry on a romance to prove that true love was possible in a period full of treachery.

"Meet Dr. Christian" introduces the radio character in his first film, but surrounds him with so many clichés that we feel we've seen him many times before. Naturally the citizens of River's End, Minnesota, love their Dr. Christian—and why shouldn't they? Getting practically nothing in payment, except a bushel of tomatoes, he treats all patients, advises the mayor in running the town, helps Cupid untangle puppy love's snags, performs a difficult brain operation. Jean Hersholt takes on all these duties and creates another nice, sentimental, homey, medical rôle. The picture's point seems to be that it is better to be a good doctor in a small pond than an inhuman, efficient mayor in River's End.

"That's Right, You're Wrong" shows what difficulties movie producers encounter when they try to use band leaders in films. Kay Kyser is the leader who is too much for Adolphe Menjou, Four Star Studios' ace producer. Kay and his band do a lot of kidding around and play some hot numbers that will soon be popular. The spoofing gets off at a good start but it doesn't follow through. Making a glamorous Casanova out of Kay has possibilities that this picture never quite fulfils in spite of its satirizing Hollywood. However all this may appeal to those who enjoy watching a band's clowning or radio's College of Musical Knowledge. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Hollywood's Business

Foremost Films of 1938, by Frank Vreeland. New York: Pitman Publishing Company. $3.50.
Let's Go to the Movies, by William Clayton Pryor and Helen Sloman Pryor. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

THE AUTHOR of "Foremost Films of 1938," the first in a new annual series designed to do for the screen what Burns Mantle's "Best Plays" does for the stage, seems to have had difficulty in deciding who would be his readers. Introductory chapters on the year in pictures, production in Hollywood and foreign films give interesting information on the industry and trends, practically no criticism, too many unreliable predictions on pictures planned for next year and far too much fan chit-chat, such as Garbo's not wanting to have children, Pons's wanting a large family and Garfield's and Cagney's vieing to play Nijinsky. Some of this may be of news value in this industry which depends on personalities, but it is hardly appropriate in a reference book. However for the core of this book with its valuable material for students of the cinema, Frank Vreeland, who is well qualified through his experience in Hollywood and as a New York critic, should be thanked. He has condensed ten of the year's outstanding films with important dialogue, casts, production staffs, illustrations and his own pointed comments and keen analyses. It would be foolish to quibble over the ten that Mr. Vreeland chose, for he admits that expediency and copyright difficulties influenced the list: "Wells Fargo," "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," "The Buccaneer," "In Old Chicago," "Algiers," "Love Finds Andy Hardy," "You Can't Take It With You," "The Citadel," "The Young in Heart," "That Certain Age." But even more important than Mr. Vreeland's salient discussion of this ten is his listing almost 500 of 1938's films with casts, personnel, release dates and thumbnail sketches of plots. It is sincerely hoped that Mr. Vreeland will continue his worthwhile series—with more stress on the serious art of the cinema and less on who is married to whom.

It is surprising that so few books are written about United States' fourth largest industry. The Pryors dedicate their books to high school teachers and principals and write mainly for students, but they include much that is of interest to general movie-goers, especially those who would like to make their appreciation more keen through intelligent evaluation. Without going into big finance, the authors discuss why movies cost so much and give advice on how to avoid the pitfalls of Hollywood's lavishness. They make an earnest plea for improvement in newsreels, shorts and documentaries. The major portion of the book deals with the making of feature films, with separate chapters and many illustrations on story, direction, acting, cinematography (photography), recording, editing, sets, costumes, make-up. The authors emphasize the importance of directors, writers and editors, deplore the unfortunate "star system" that has put money in producers' pockets but contributed little to the art of motion pictures and hope that the full possibilities of sound will soon be realized. I wish that the Pryors had used more names in citing examples of good and bad cinema work. This book may not make critics of all its

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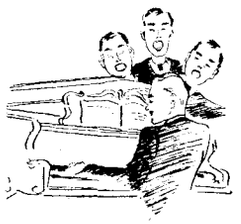
The melody lingers on



The melody lingers on . . (provided you don't tear your new piano apart the way Anton Rubinstein did*) . . it lingers long after the first carol is played on your new piano, till the days your sweet faced boy caroler sings a great big baritone). The man who picks our pianos is not some one who worked up from a stock boy, but a Doctor of Music with a hatful of degrees. Thanks to his careful choosing we carry Mason & Hamlin, Knabe, Chickering, Minipiano, Everett, Estey, Haddorff, Musette. Thanks to his knowledge of musical instruments we have our own John Wanamaker piano in 7 handsome models at a saving of $50 to $150 on an instrument. No wonder we're musical headquarters for the largest city in the nation! Pianos are now on the *Fifth Floor, Home Store.*

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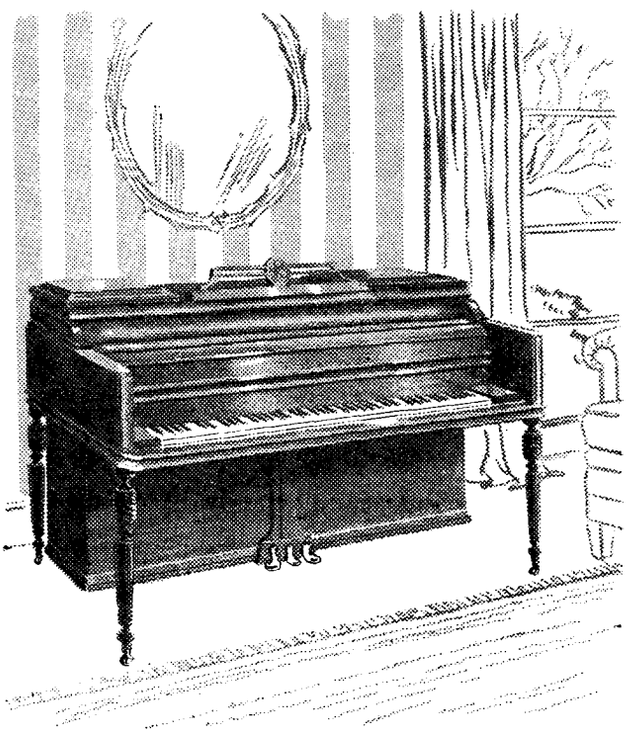

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readers, but it should make them more aware of what goes into a movie and what to look for when seeing a movie. Some readers may become disillusioned about Hollywood; but that won't matter.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

BIOGRAPHY

Thoreau, by Henry Seidel Canby. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $3.75.

THOREAU was a man who never understood himself and was never understood by others. There was a curiously warped and twisted personality behind the simplicity which he affected as another affects sophistication. The problems of that personality have never been solved by previous biographers, and regretably Dr. Canby's much heralded study throws little light on these riddles. Perhaps it is impossible to clarify such matters at this date, but it would seem that the theories of modern psychology might have been applied with some profit to this rather well documented case. For even more than with Emerson, Thoreau's works are Thoreau himself, and there is an abundance of secondary source material. Under these circumstances it is not enough to do as Dr. Canby has done, and shunt aside all psychological considerations, except for a bow to Freud by attempting to prove that Thoreau, far from being incapable of love for women, had many love affairs, although they were strictly transcendental ones.

Dr. Canby's book is nevertheless useful to the lover of Thoreau. It has been done carefully and with affection for its subject. A deal of labor has obviously gone into it, and an incredible figure in American letters is made somewhat more credible. It is a pity that Dr. Canby has assumed that his readers know as much about Henry Thoreau as he did when he began this work, for to many he is only a legend: a friendless poet-naturalist who led a hermit's life without regard for the great people and great events that constituted his environment. This book makes out a good case for radically different conclusions, but the reader, like the visitor to an immense palace in the hands of a weary and over-expert guide, is hurried on from one sight to another, able only to cast longing eyes at some fascinating sideroom or promising passageway. Thoreau's friendship with the poet Ellery Channing is mentioned many times, but never really analysed. And this was Thoreau's closest approximation to a near relationship to another human being. Thoreau's Concord is faithfully described, but his other environments are only named. This book gives no idea of the pulsing, vital movement which swept New England in the forties, carrying Thoreau along to fame with it; yet its center was Concord and its leaders were Thoreau's fellow townsmen. There is the same difficulty about the construction of the book: the narrative does not run chronologically, but pauses, backs and fills as Dr. Canby goes haring off on some point which interests him. The reader unfamiliar with the main outlines of Thoreau's life is sometimes left stranded until the chronological narrative is resumed.

Despite these carpings, which arise more from disappointment at what might have been expected than from the book itself, this biography should do much to bring Thoreau into men's minds again and to make his books required reading for all those who are concerned with the significant elements in our past. Thoreau is more honored today than he was in his lifetime; but it is largely a lip service, and the ascetic thinker of the eighteen-forties

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has something of importance to say to the materialists of the nineteen-thirties. It is to be hoped that the message will not be disregarded, that it will be widely heard.

MASON WADE.

Maud, edited by Richard Lee Strout. New York: The Macmillan Company. $3.50.

THE STUBBY TITLE of this book is in arch contrast with its contents, six hundred pages of the thoughts and feelings of Isabella Maud Rittenhouse of Cairo, Illinois, written between 1881 and 1895. Little did Maud imagine, as she began her pert and impertinent revelations of her personality, that her journals would reflect and express to a later generation a good many of the realities of the genuine America of her era. Certainly times have changed. This journal proves that all changes are not improvements. "Maud" is a picture of a feminine world, a portrait as sensible as any on exhibition of the masculine world of the time. The key to Maud's mind is in the entry for October 30, 1889: "Nothing is so full of surprises as these everyday lives of ours." That is the philosophy of Howells' literary realism too. It may be handy to remember his "Silas Lapham" and "Indian Summer" and "April Hopes," all written in the 80's. Howells portrayed reality; Maud lived it.

Henry James should have known her. These pages, probing the complexities of her mind and her emotions, show an audacious, independent spirit. In comparison with Maud, "Daisy Miller" is an irritation, while James's finest achievement offers a phrase to describe our diarist's spirit with superb simplicity. "Maud" is the portrait of a lady. She had happy and definite ideas on American culture. One of her friends wanted "to be for a time among cultured people. It is so tame here in the west." To this in the diary for April 9, 1882, Maud replied: "I declare, I was disgusted. . . . I told her she'd better attempt culture at home for awhile."

The fifteen years of Maud's life included in the chapters of this record range through her high school days, her social activities of gleeful conquests, the decline of her father's fortunes, her necessary work as teacher and amateur artist, her literary success (especially that $1000 prize novel of life in North Carolina about which she knew nothing) and ends with her marriage. From her mother she seems to have inherited a trait that adds piquancy to her account of her intricate love affairs—the urge to improve others. Maud tried earnestly and cheerfully to mold her admirers nearer to her heart's ideals: nearer to temperance, religion, art, or even a sense of humor.

Her emotional outbursts are often dramatic, frequently amusing, always honest. From the days when she flared out with, "I hate boys!!!" or "Oh dear, oh dear. I like boy friends, not boy lovers" to the time, five years later when, on September 23, 1887 she wrote, "However unusual it may be, however contrary to nature and experience, I do truly love *three* men, *now,* at the same time," Maud manifests a spirit freed from prurient obsession. Maud's unabashed decency is refreshing. The wealth of her emotions gives depth and amusement to her diary; her rich intelligence adds keen pleasure to her comments; her happy heart inspires the lengthy record of her experiences with sparkles of delight. Maud is still alive, "a pleased observer" of the popularity and excitement her published journals are creating.

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CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Seven Against the Years, by Sterling North. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

SEVEN FRATERNITY men of varied ancestry leave the University of Chicago just after a dynamic idealist has taken charge, just before the collapse of material security.

With a gifted and convincing pen, with a grim and sometimes brazen sense of humor, Sterling North, literary editor of the *Chicago Daily News,* has described the characters as they move through the ensuing years. He has pictured a renegade Irish Catholic, a rich woman's man, a loyal Swedish lover, an unethical Greek, a literary man, contemptuous of prayer and sacraments, the anti-semitic son of a German packer, a self-righteous welfare worker.

On the surface, they are gentlemen; that is their moral code. They mean to be careful, effective, to grow rich. They meet again after ten years, at the fraternity house, very ordinary men, of whom their Alma Mater could not always be proud.

All the characters live. In sharp contrast, the love scene of Mark Harbord and his wife, penniless, camping in the Dunes, and the second honeymoon of Frederick Oswald Blucher III on his private yacht, from which he returns alone. Unforgettable horror scenes in the Home for the Hopeless, and the merry encounter of Maloney with the pretty young teacher under whose desk he had found lodging for the night. The heroism and tragedy of Karl Gunderson's career is told in one poignant telephone conversation.

Will there be a sequel to this book, "Seven Against Later Years"? It could recount the scholarly conferences and merry outings of the Calvert Club; the real welfare work of a poet in a House of Hospitality; it could show a convert philosopher teaching the encyclicals to Labor Colleges, and a social scientist finishing his doctor's thesis while studying for the priesthood. Morals and romance and heroism a-plenty are still to be found on the Midway.

Mr. North could have written a happier book. Perhaps he will. JOHANNA DONIAT.

American Tel & Tel, by Horace Coon. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $3.00.

TO PROVIDE an insight into monopolies, whether financial bigness is a detriment or a blessing for a country, Horace Coon traces the development of the Bell Telephone System into its present five billion dollar enterprise wholly controlled by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company.

It is not so much a history of the rise of A. T. & T. as an analysis of the natural monopoly into which the telephone communication system has finally emerged and what it means from the standpoint of the stockholders, subscribers and employees. The author has gleaned his material from many sources, but there lingers the thought that he approaches his work in the spirit of a physician conducting a post-mortem examination, as if a thorough investigation will reveal something wrong. He shows a marked sympathy for the suggestions advanced by Mr. Paul A. Walker, who headed the Federal Communications Commission investigation of A. T. & T. Mr. Walker found fault with accounting systems, depreciation reserves and the independence of the problem child of the Bell System, the Western Electric, manufacturer of most of the telephone equipment, from any control by the

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State Commissions determining telephone rates for the various associated companies making up the Bell System. Strict federal control of costs at Western Electric is advanced as the biggest single factor in providing cheaper telephone service, something Mr. Coon seems to feel is possible.

The book is not on the muck-raking order. The author frankly concedes that none of the vicious practices attending the growth of other monopolies can be found in A. T. and T., and he admits that it rose to its almost impregnable position by careful management and far-seeing vision in exploiting the telephone field. The only charge leveled against it is that competition in its own field has been eliminated, whether the course of elimination demanded acquisition and holding of patents or agreements to refrain from competing in new fields in return for a free hand in telephony, as it has worked out in telegraphy and radio.

For those who favor the rugged individualism of the capitalistic system, monopolies like A. T. & T. will appear to be good things. Mr. Coon advances the hypothesis that a full investigation of the institution on the order of the O'Mahoney Monopoly Investigation, which will give facts and figures, might reveal the necessity for reforms which can be achieved by more vigilant federal control. Apologists of the latter order will find ample material within the pages of "American Tel & Tel" to supplement their talking points. JAMES B. COONEY.

FICTION

A Sea Island Lady, by Francis Griswold. New York: William Morrow and Co. $3.00.

THIS BOOK is practically an American "Cavalcade." It deals in some detail with the emotional, domestic and practical problems which faced a young Northern woman who went South during the Civil War as the wife of a carpetbagger, but who subsequently married a Southerner, and thereupon became warp and woof of the texture that represented reconstruction. The historical thread is evident and faithful to events as they happened. Her own problems, however, keep the reader's attention from the Civil War period until Harding's administration. Into the family of which Emily Fenwick was the most important unit there came happiness, wealth, poverty, tragedy, disgrace and death. The whole complicated life span of this woman is set forth in a book which is long and rather complicated, so far as the activity of the characters is concerned.

The conversations of the characters are natural. This is a decidedly unusual feature of a present day novel, since one gets the impression from reading some of them that those who wrote them never heard people talk. The author has the gift of compressing the account of many events into small compass. The chronological continuity of the sixty year period is achieved so easily that the passage of time is hardly noted, and one wonders why Emily Fenwick has become an old lady. The book is not a vehicle for any type of propaganda, but the social changes associated with the period 1890-1900, for example, are treated with vigor and clarity. The sea island country, that area off the coast, south of Charleston, becomes an era in which life is lived fully and fruitfully. It is said that the author spent seven years in writing the novel. Representing as it does, a story which is much more than merely another fictional account of reconstruction and the South, it seems as though this work should be ranked

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as one of the very best novels of the current year. It is realistic without being disgusting, and it is interesting without being cheaply melodramatic. It will be read by those who appreciate good fiction. PAUL KINIERY.

MISCELLANEOUS

Orchard's Bay, by Alfred Noyes, New York: Sheed and Ward. $2.50.

"ORCHARD'S BAY" perpetuates one of the great traditions of English literature. It is the highly personal book written just in the way that the author wants to write. It reminds one at times of Sir Thomas Browne, at other times of Isaac Walton—chiefly because the book is entirely Alfred Noyes, a man with a soul and a hobby. It has the full body of a unique wine; you take a chapter of it and luxuriate and, paradoxically, you find the next chapter equally rare and yet mysteriously quite different. It is definitely a book for the wine cellar and the connoiseur. In other words, no library of an educated American should be without it. For others—well, it is "caviare to the general."

Mr. Noyes has a photographic passion for the meticulous beauties of the ancestral English garden. He can never recover from the sheer beauty of flowers that have for him all the movement and eccentric beauty of butterfly and bird. In his fastidious garden he recaptures Eden and makes one feel nostalgic for the beauty of the heavenly home. But, amusingly enough, while Noyes takes you on the soaring wings of poetry, he is at all times a gardener. While he may be listening to the seraph's wings, he is very particular about the efficiency of the work done before his eyes.

There is only one note in the whole book—a book that really has "infinite treasures in a little room"—that jars me. It is a small thing that affords a contrast to the varied and magnificient poetry to the scholarly reminiscence and intuitive insight of the work as a whole. It is the dismissal of the gardener who was careless in the planting of trees—because he had no faith in the future. " 'Before that tree is fifteen feet high, you and me will be under the daisies,' " was one of his discouraging remarks. How could he, with that defeatist attitude, plant a garden that would be treasured for generations? There is undoubted blasphemy in the gardener's attitude, but I feel sorry for him—especially, about his dismissal. He is for me a symbol of modern man, disillusioned with the past and without faith for the future. He cannot cultivate his gardens like Alfred Noyes. WILLIAM J. GRACE.

PHILOSOPHY

I Believe, by various authors. Edited by Clifton Fadiman. New York: Simon and Schuster. $3.75.

THERE ARE twenty-one contributors to this volume. One only—Maritain—has orthodox Christian beliefs.

To review a book like this is impossible because it is less a book than a bundle of disconnected psychographs. The fundamental ideas in the several essays may, however, be presented on a scale not unlike that used by the contributors themselves. These ideas seem to be about as follows:

W. H. Auden—A group of more or less obvious abstractions.

Pearl Buck—We know nothing. Let us act and thereby avoid death.

Stuart Chase—There is something to be said for a decent regard for others.

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Havelock Ellis—Belief is the outcome of experience and the unconscious.

E. M. Forster—I believe nothing, but I like well-bred people.

Ellen Glasgow—The worst part of war is that so many people enjoy it.

Lancelot Hogben—Life should be based on science, but the masses want circuses.

Harold J. Laski—Marx was right.

Lin Yutang—I am so "religious" that religions make me "furious."

Thomas Mann—The future will be a happy time.

Jacques Maritain—"Woe to the world should the Christians turn their back on it. . . ."

Jules Romains—Belief is analogous to madness.

George Santayana—I have chosen disillusion. (*Note: Mr. Santayana has done so in very elegant prose, which I saw published elsewhere years ago. It is still good prose.*)

Vilhjalmur Stefansson—Give me the copper Eskimo and an all-meat diet everytime.

John Strachey—Collectivism is the answer.

James Thurber—I give up. Maybe it is my nervousness.

Henrik Willem Van Loon—The whole business is interesting but unimportant—a secret I've been preserving for 57 years.

Rebecca West—I have faith in pleasurable processes.

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

Of Human Freedom, by Jacques Barzun. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

"ALL IS CHANGE," "Man is the measure of all things," "There are no absolutes." Such is the pragmatism of which Professor Barzun's book is made. Like so many of his contemporaries and like so many of his predecessors, he is afraid that there may be something fixed, but if so, it would be just too bad for democracy. His work deals mainly with the economic, the social and the political; and he fails to realize that he can still believe in his changing world and still be a good Aristotelian or a Thomist. Yet he fears that in the approach to education of the neo-scholastics there is the sinister possibility of having all things fixed and happily catalogued. Somehow the reiterated insistance of the scholastics that politics deals with the accidental, the contingent, the changing fails of comprehension by the modern pragmatist. The concluding chapter contains every pragmatic error known to man. Fortunately, however, the book deals with subject matter that properly falls within the sphere of change.

Within those limits Professor Barzun has written a lively piece of work. His discussions of scientism, the tyranny of words and modern education abound in wit and wisdom. The laborious efforts of some social scientists to make of their discipline an exact science receives adequate consideration in one chapter which in part may be summed up in these words: "The aim is to make measurement exact and to sort out causes. But the social sciences deal with man, and man is notoriously refractory to division. No sooner has 'economic man' been split off by the economist than the same in-dividual (aptly so-called) acts in his capacity as 'sentimental man' or 'Chinaman' and defeats the investigation."

The chapter on the tyranny of words is entitled "Absolute Words and Absolute Nonsense"; the chapter on education is entitled "What Any Schoolboy Knows: a Mystery." Such captions would lead anyone on. What follows is delightful reading.

JEROME G. KERWIN.

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The Inner Forum

ONE HUNDRED bishops and archbishops attended the annual meeting of the American hierarchy at Washington, D. C., in late November, held in conjunction with a celebration of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the American hirarchy. Archbishop Stritch of Milwaukee was made Administrative Chairman of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, succeeding Archbishop Mooney of Detroit. An episcopal committee for Polish relief under the chairmanship of Bishop Boyle of Pittsburgh was established and plans for coordinating relief abroad were inaugurated.

Reports of the various NCWC departments indicated extensive activities in many fields. The Social Action Department, for instance, told of 200 sessions on industrial relations, peace, citizenship and rural life in regional or national conferences sponsored at 20 meetings by 9 different organizations. Other important aspects of this work included Priests' Schools for Social Action, study clubs, book and pamphlet publications.

The National Council of Catholic Men reported considerable progress for the "Catholic Hour" radio broadcasts sent out every Sunday over a national network at 6 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. At the end of the last fiscal year it was being carried by 81 stations in 40 states, the national capital and Hawaii. "Fan mail" increased to 714,050 pieces for the year.

The NCWC Bureau of Immigration had a particularly busy year because of the war in Europe. The filling of quotas from many countries for from 3 to 10 years ahead led to many demands for assistance in the securing of visas, the obtaining of extensions of stay in this country, assistance to religious orders in these matters and the rendering of material aid. The publications department sent out 174,135 pamphlets, 19,703 of them encyclicals of Pius XI.

CONTRIBUTORS

Doris KIRKPATRICK is a new contributor from Minnesota, who has recently returned from Germany.

Katherine BREGY is a frequent contributor of book reviews. She is a poet and lecturer whose books include "The Poet's Chantry," "Poets and Pilgrims," and "From Dante to Joanne d'Arc. She is president of the Catholic Poetry Society of America.

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